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PUNCH or The London Charivari—December 21 1955

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I always insist on....



FACTORY LINED
REPLACEMENT BRAKE SHOES
FACTORY REBUILT
DAMPERS
GENUINE
GIRLING SPARKS
GENUINE
GIRLING CRIMSON BRAKE FLUID

**GENUINE
GIRLING
SERVICE**

when my brakes need
attention...

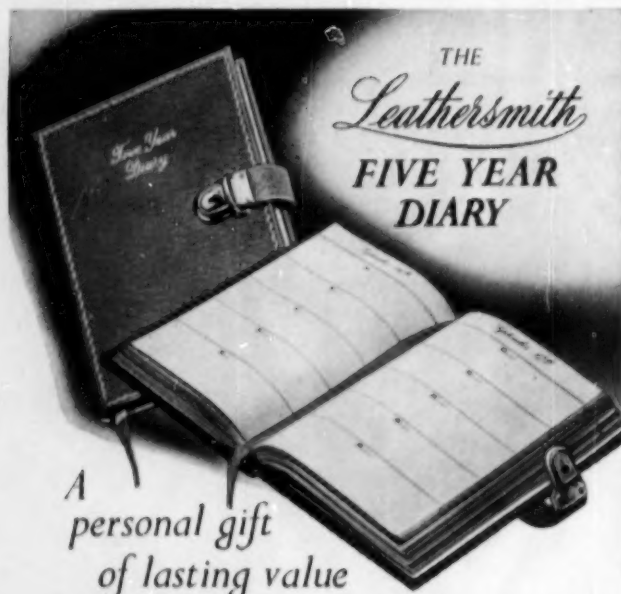
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THE BEST BRAKES IN THE WORLD

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A
personal gift
of lasting value

With superfine white paper, the bindings,
finely tooled, are Antique finish leather, Morocco
or rich Hazel Pigskin. Size 5½" x 4½". With or
without lock. Gift boxed. From 13/3 to 31/6 each.

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Craftsmen in fine leathers for over 100 years

To make a good time better



BY APPOINTMENT
TO HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
GIN DISTILLERS
BOOTH'S DISTILLERIES LIMITED

Choose
BOOTH'S
DRY GIN

There is only **ONE** best!

The Wolseley Four-Fortyfour has a 4 cyl. o.h.v. engine of 1250 c.c. Excellent suspension and road-holding. Real English leather upholstery, pile carpets. Safety glass all round.



Noblesse is obliged to

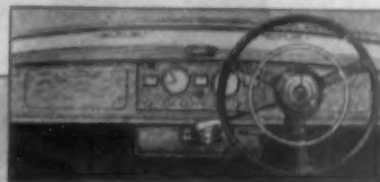
If one is very rich, choosing a car is easy. The trick is to coincide expensive and discriminating tastes with a moderate income. This the Wolseley Four-Fortyfour is doing very successfully for many people who want something better than a multi-production model without having to pay a lot for it. It gives you about as good a performance as you can use on our roads, its superb comfort, suspension and visibility are quite remarkable in a 1½ litre and above all it looks what it is—a car of unmistakable character and distinction. Noblesse ought to be very obliged to Wolseley . . .



An in-built heating, demisting and ventilation unit is conveniently placed under the fascia.



Exceptionally wide and deep luggage locker with easily operated counter-balanced lid.



Polished walnut panel. Instruments and controls neatly and conveniently grouped.

Buy wisely—buy

WOLSELEY

Four-Fortyfour



REMEMBER. Quality and dependability are guaranteed by the B.M.C. Used-Car Warranty and you are certain of a good deal when you sell.

WOLSELEY MOTORS LTD., COWLEY, OXFORD
 London Showrooms: 12 Berkeley Street, W.1. Overseas Business: Nuffield Exports Ltd, Oxford and 41 Piccadilly, London, W.1



*Famous
for
nearly
300
years.*



Here is a liqueur for the connoisseur — distinctive — delectable. Into this notable blend of finest brandy, aromatic tangerines and other rare ingredients, is distilled the sunshine of "the fairest Cape in the whole circumference of the Earth." Grace your after-dinner table with Bertram's Van Der Hum and give a unique pleasure to yourself and to your friends.



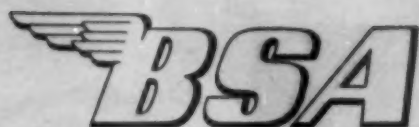
The story of "Mr. W'bat'-s-his-name."

The early Dutch settlers in the Cape of Good Hope made a liqueur in imitation of their famous Curacao. Being unable to recall the name of the original distiller, they referred to him as "Van Der Hum" — the Dutch equivalent of "Mr. What's-his-name." And that, according to legend, is how this famous liqueur got its name.

Bertrams

ORIGINAL

Van der Hum
LIQUEUR



GROUP'S PROGRESSIVE RECORD

Extracts from Sir Bernard Docker's speech at the ninety-fourth Annual General Meeting of the Birmingham Small Arms Co.

" The record profits of the previous year have been substantially maintained."

" The controversial Autumn Budget, which was declared necessary to control inflation and to buttress sterling, has added to the burden of taxation. The Purchase Tax as a financial device is a tangle of absurdities and anomalies, as shown by intense criticism in the Press. The main objective of a Chancellor should be the reduction of abnormal Government expenditure and its consequent burden, and by incentives in the basis of taxation to stimulate export business."

Pensions For Hourly-paid Workers

" I have the pleasure of announcing the Board's decision to offer to the eligible hourly-paid employees in the Group a Contributory Pension and Life Assurance Scheme, commencing on 1st February, 1956 All grades of employees in the B.S.A. Group will now be enabled to enjoy the benefits of such a Scheme It is in everybody's interests to do everything in his or her power to ensure the continuance of the conditions in which the Company can pay for such a Scheme."

" Your Company is extremely well equipped both in personnel, engineering skill and organised capacity, to take full advantage of every opportunity which may present itself, and with this in mind, we feel justified in going forward into the future with some confidence."

THE FAR-REACHING ACTIVITIES OF THE B.S.A. GROUP OF COMPANIES ARE CARRIED ON AT:—

BIRMINGHAM

Motor Cycles and Bicycles, Guns and Rifles, Machine Tools and Small Tools

COVENTRY

Motor Cars and Buses

SHEFFIELD

Special Steels

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE

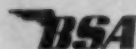
Heavy Engineering

LONDON

Motor Vehicle Bodies

ALSO IN

Eire · France · Canada · U.S.A.



The New-Daimler One-O-Four
1 1/2 Litre Saloon



B.S.A.-ARIEL-SUNBEAM-TRIUMPH



Wherever or whatever the load a
B.S.A. cycle will carry it.



One of the many uses for B.S.A.
power units.

You'll bless the day
you took me...
seriously



With an ESSE Fairy cooker-in your kitchen—the most important place in the home—you will really find life easier. Early or late, the two spacious ovens and fast boiling hotplate are hot and at your service. There's ample hot water for 2 to 3 baths a day plus washing. As for cooking quality, just taste the light delicious pastry from an ESSE indirectly heated oven... mmmmmmm... there's nothing to beat it.

Thermostatic control, no daily lighting, and no oven flues to clean. Smogless coke, anthracite, or Phurnacite are the fuels.

Perhaps best of all, an ESSE puts money in your pocket. "Our savings in fuel, electricity and extras, practically pay the H.P. instalments," wrote a user recently. Cash price with boiler from £113.13.9.



By Appointment
To Her Majesty The Queen
Manufacturers of
ESSE Cooking Equipment

SMITH & WELLSTOOD LTD
Bonnybridge, Stirlingshire
London: 63 Conduit Street W1
Also at Liverpool, Edinburgh,
Glasgow & Dublin

FREE! Post this coupon in unsealed envelope (1½d stamp)
for colour folder DC and name of your nearest stockist.

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ADDRESS _____



Belinda Wright

A Mirror
of Grace...
The Movado
collection
"Ballerina 55"

Inspired by the countless interpretations of Beauty expressed on the stage by the star ballerina, Movado has created the "Ballerina 55" collection, symbolizing grace in all its perfection.

It contains for the delight of every woman a special series, unique in its way, of miniature watches among the smallest ever conceived by human ingenuity.

Supremely lovely, irresistibly attractive!

They are the only watches in this diminutive size possessing the famous Movado super-precision indispensable to those living at the tempo of 1955.

Platinum
watch with
Diamonds,
miniature model,
ref. 055, £160.0.0.



MOVADO

Delightful ornaments... miracles of precision!

Winter lack of **SUNSHINE**
brings more illness

**DOCTORS
PRESCRIBE**

—vitaminising ultra-violet
and deeply penetrating
infra-red rays.

FOR THE OLD—to
relieve pains, particularly
Rheumatic, Sciatic and
similar conditions.

FOR THE YOUNG—
to help their bones to grow,
through the anti-ricket
Vitamin D.



British made
Guaranteed for
12 months

ACTINEA
the Portable Sun

£14.14.0

(Exempt from
Purchase Tax)
On prescription.

Combines ultra-violet with infra-red. These rays, used under medical guidance, relieve pain, regenerate the tissues, destroy many germs and help to build up resistance against our winter climate.

FROM YOUR CHEMIST OR ELECTRICAL DEALER

ULTRA-VIOLET SOURCE
150 watt High Pressure Quartz
tube. Erythema dose: 1 minute
at 1 yard.

INFRA-RED SOURCE
400 watt, deeply penetrating, entirely front
wired, black body element. Closes up to
9½" x 6" x 5".

Write for illustrated leaflet to: Dept. P.3.

PERIHEL LIMITED
27-29 RABBIT ROW, LONDON, W.8.



It is an interesting reflection that Piccadilly No. 1 have gained their acceptance amongst influential people entirely on their merits and by recommendation from one man to another. Not surprising when you know that this large size fine Virginia cigarette is *all* choice leaf—the pick of the crop from the world's finest tobacco plantations.

twenty for 3/10



Both tea and humour have their
 connoisseurs, and the British brands
 dispensed respectively by .



Mr. Horniman and Mr. Punch

have found an appreciative public for
 more than a century.



Each is distinctive in flavour, rare in
 quality, true to standard and a source
 of abiding pleasure.



HORNIMANS

ESTABLISHED 1826

Rich and Fragrant

W. H. & F. J. HORNIMAN & CO. LTD., SHEPHERDESS WALK, LONDON, N.1



"Me gusta mucho"

(—el Monumento)

"Me it pleases much!"
 —as they say in Spain
 where Monument
 Sherry is matured in
 bodegas especially to
 please you much.
 This is true full
 flavoured Spanish
 Amontillado,
 neither too dry nor
 too sweet, strong,
 full-bodied, appe-
 titising and fortifying
 —the sherry that
 pleases men and women
 too. You will say "Me
 gusta mucho" at the
 very first sip.



Monument

FINEST AMONTILLADO sherry

Send for Trial Bottle Post Free to Davidson Newman
 & Co. Ltd., 14 Creechurch Lane, London, E.C.3,
 enclosing remittance of 20/-, or write for the
 name of your nearest stockist to the Shippers,
 Julian & Trower Ltd., 25 Laurence Pountney
 Lane, London, E.C.4.



TRINIDAD LEASEHOLDS LTD

Highlights from the 1955 statement by the Chairman, Mr. Simon J. Vos

Abstracted from the chairman's statement circulated with the accounts of Trinidad Leaseholds Ltd. for the year ended 30th June, 1955, with previous year's figures in brackets.

A satisfactory outcome of another year's operations is reported. Intensive competition and other factors continued to depress returns from oil and freight; also wages and other charges have again risen. On the other hand, the burden of taxation was not so onerous.

A further increase in Trinidad crude oil production was more than offset by an improvement in proven reserves. The Trinidad refinery operated at a higher level of throughput. Demand for its products continued to grow, particularly for "REGENT T.T." and "REGENT BENZOLE MIXTURE", the premium petrols sold by Regent Oil Company and held in high esteem by motorists in the United Kingdom.

The net profit of the group was £2,312,682 (£1,851,629) after providing £2,480,439 (£3,400,217) for taxation. The net profit of the parent company was £1,937,559 (£1,563,851) and the total available for appropriation in the parent company's accounts was £2,522,792 (£2,041,014). From this £1,000,000 (£800,000) has been transferred to general reserve, dividends paid and proposed total £710,429 (£655,781) and a balance of unappropriated profit of £812,363 (£585,233) has been carried forward.

It is proposed to issue scrip on a "one for five" basis which will improve the relationship of the issued capital to that employed in the business.

In Trinidad improvement in the group's proven reserves resulted largely from outstep drilling in the Palo Seco field of the Company's wholly owned subsidiary, Siparia Trinidad Oilfields Ltd.

Refinery production of premium gasoline for the

United Kingdom comprising "REGENT T.T." and "REGENT BENZOLE MIXTURE" was further increased to meet the demand for these high grade products. Plans for increasing refinery capacity to provide for greater production of premium motor spirit by modifications to the distillation plants were well in hand at the end of the year.

In Canada, the Company's subsidiary carried out geological, seismic and gravimetric surveys and participated in drilling two wells, both offering encouragement to further testing of the areas concerned. The Port Credit refinery throughput exceeded that for the previous year and, to provide funds for a major refinery extension and expanded marketing facilities, debentures and equity stock, totalling Can.\$13,000,000 have been issued. To identify the subsidiary's name more closely with "REGENT", its name has been changed to Regent Refining (Canada) Ltd.

In the United Kingdom, Regent Oil Company Ltd., the marketing organisation through which the company's products are sold, has had to contend with very fierce competition. Notwithstanding, the motorist has remained loyal to Regent Oil Company's premium brands of motor spirit — "REGENT T.T." and "REGENT BENZOLE MIXTURE" — and thus has recognised the aim to provide products of the highest quality coupled with first class service to the customer. As a result, Regent Oil Company ended the year in an even stronger market position than before.

Tribute is paid to the able assistance rendered by the company's partner, California Texas Corporation, in the direction of Regent Oil Company's business.



REGENT PACKS PUNCH!

Chart a Course for Britain's Second National BOAT SHOW

See the latest

Yachts • Motorboats • Dinghies • Canoes
Engines • Accessories • Sails
Paints • Fittings

Other attractions

Build-It-Yourself Boatyard • Cinema • School for Sailing
60 m.p.h. Sand Yacht • Famous Sloop Wanderer III • 'Fishing
Afloat' Feature • Marine Artists' Exhibition • Free Information
on all boating topics • Talks by well-known Yachtsmen.

OLYMPIA
(EMPIRE HALL)

DEC. 29 — JAN. 10

10 a.m. — 9 p.m. daily Adults 2/6, Children 1/6

Opening day 11 a.m. — 5 p.m. 10/-

Organised by the Ship & Boat Builders' National Federation

SPONSORED BY THE
DAILY EXPRESS

A new gin for that extra special occasion

BURROUGH'S

Extra Dry



Here is a gin that is as different
from an ordinary gin as Champagne
is from an ordinary sparkling wine.
Try it neat and see. Roll it round
your tongue and savour its fine flavour,
its velvet mellowness. Or try it in
your favourite cocktail.

You pay a little more for this
De Luxe gin, but you get immeasurably
greater pleasure. Ask your Wine
Merchant. Price — 35/6 a bottle.



JAMES BURROUGH LTD., 11, NUTT'S ROAD, LONDON, E.C. 11. DISTILLERS OF DISTILLATION SINCE 1858



YOUR PASSPORT for a delicious tour of France—in Britain!

Without even leaving the table, you can have much of the joy of a
tour through France, land of sunshine and good living! Get your
wine merchant's advice. He'll tell you that wine really means France,
and France means a whole series of glorious wines—a choice for
every taste and every mood. Every pocket, too: prices range from
about 6/6 a bottle. Here's a brief reminder:

ALSACE

On the French side of the Rhine, Alsace produces many white wines of distinction. The dry Riesling, the robust Traminer, the elegant pale-green Sylvaner, the full, medium Muscat—all are crisp and clean, fresh and fragrant.

BORDEAUX

The pure and fragrant red Bordeaux (Claret to us) include Médoc, St. Emilion, Pomerol, and many others. Of the excellent white wines, Graves is on the dry side, Sauternes richer and sweeter. From honest *ordinaux* to superb château wines, Bordeaux offer fine value at every price.

BURGUNDY

Rich and full-bodied, the red Burgundies—Beaune, Nuits, Macon, Beaujolais, and many others—are perfect with roasts and grills. White Burgundies include fresh, dry Chablis and Pouilly Fuisse, golden Montrachet and Meursault.

CHAMPAGNE

The wine districts of Epernay, Rheims and Ay are consecrated to the production of a French miracle—Champagne, sparkling wine of sparkling gaiety!

Champagne is the perfect drink for any festive occasion, and can be enjoyed from hors-d'œuvre to dessert.

LANGUEDOC/PROVENCE, ROUSSILLON & ALGERIA

The sun-baked south of France, between Atlantic and Mediterranean, produces delicious wines—red, white and *rosé*—famous locally but less known abroad. These wines, and those of Algeria, are modestly priced and excellent value.

RHONE

Much the best-known of the Côtes du Rhône wines is the glorious Châteaufort du Pape from near Avignon. But there are many other favourites—such as Hermitage, Côte-Rôtie, and Tavel *rosé*.

TOURNAINE/ANJOU

From the valleys of the Loire and the Cher come the fresh and ever-refreshing *Rosé d'Anjou*; delicate *Vouvray*, both still and sparkling; fruity *Sauvignac*; and *Muscadet* with its distinctive fragrance.

Welcome to the glorious WINES OF FRANCE

ISSUED BY THE FRENCH NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR WINE PUBLICITY, IN
CONJUNCTION WITH THE WINE & SPIRIT ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN



THE BRITISH MOTOR CORPORATION

A GOOD YEAR WITH SATISFACTORY RESULTS OUTPUT INCREASED BY 18 PER CENT NEW MODELS WELL RECEIVED

The 4th Annual General Meeting of The British Motor Corporation, Ltd., was held on December 15, at Longbridge Works, Birmingham, Sir Leonard Lord, K.B.E., Chairman and Managing Director, presiding.

The following is an extract from the Chairman's statement which was circulated with the report and accounts for the year to July 31, 1955:

Once more may I say "Welcome to Longbridge," particularly as this is the Golden Jubilee Year of The Austin Motor Company. The meeting to-day must be tinged with a certain feeling of regret, because this is the last time we shall hold our meetings in this room. A new and more modern showroom is being built near the Car Assembly Building, and on this site a large Engineering and Research Block will be erected.

If you look round the factory you will see that we are still installing masses of new machinery, and you will notice very considerable building activity. I hope you will regard this as a good augury for the future.

The year has been a good one, and I am sure you will consider the results satisfactory. Our thanks are due once more to all our employees whatever their degree of responsibility, at Home and perhaps particularly those abroad, because year by year their contribution is becoming greater and more important.

PRODUCTION

The range of models now on sale from The British Motor Corporation reflects the development which is taking place.

We have kept well up to the schedule we set.

At the moment we are ahead in what is called "Automation" but new methods of production are continually being introduced all over the world.

During the year under review the production of the Corporation was 418,705 Vehicles against 353,834 for the previous year, an increase of 18%. Increased output necessitates increased sales effort, particularly abroad. It is certainly a fact that we must export to live, and Motor Vehicles are amongst the most important of British exports.

COMPETITION AND RISING COSTS

The question in many minds now is "Can the planned expanding output of the Motor Industry be sold, and if the Home Market contracts by reason of taxation or saturation can the Export Market take the balance?" As far as The British Motor Corporation is concerned I believe the answer to be "Yes," but I do not minimize the difficulties. We have to contend with the growing strength of foreign competition and the adverse effect of continually rising costs of wages and materials. Any further increases of wages anywhere in this country must therefore be accompanied by an equivalent increase in efficiency and greater output.

You will have seen from the Press that rising costs have forced many manufacturers to increase their selling prices. We have decided to maintain ours at present levels as long as possible. This means that the savings we have made by improved methods and the installation of high-production machinery are being passed on to our customers, although these savings have not been sufficient to cover the rise in costs.

We are subject to the same increases in cost as other manufacturers; perhaps they are more important in our case as our basic specifications are higher than most others. We know that we offer better "value for money" because of the excellence of our manufacturing equipment, the volume of our production and the extent of our purchases.

In taking the decision to leave our prices unaltered we had in mind the possible savings from the increased production which is planned from the factories between now and the summer of next year. Thus, whilst we are prepared to forgo some of our profit in the early stages it is obvious that if production does not rise and costs of supplies do increase we shall have to raise our prices.

PROFIT-SHARING

Profit-sharing is much in the news these days. We believe that your Company has already embarked on Profit-sharing in its best possible form.

You will have noted that last year a further Non-contributory Comprehensive Scheme was introduced to benefit check employees on death or retirement, at an approximate cost of £400,000 a year. This brings the Company's total contribution to Pension and Benefit Schemes to over £800,000 a year. This money can be regarded as tax-free income in the hands of the employees and is guaranteed to the recipients before shareholders receive anything at all. A simple calculation shows that it

is more than the shareholders would receive from a 4% distribution on the Ordinary Shares.

NEW MODELS AND DEVELOPMENTS

During the year we introduced a range of new models, all of which have been very well received. They comprise B.M.C. Diesel Engines, a new M.G.A. Sports Car, the Morris "Isis" and a complete range known as the "Series III" Commercial Vehicles both for Morris and Austin. In addition an Automatic Gearbox is now fitted on the Austin "Princess" and Overdrive as an extra on some of the smaller models.

The British Motor Industry is sometimes accused of lack of foresight and of hesitating to introduce new models of advanced design, leading to the suggestion that for these reasons it is likely to lose sales to its foreign competitors. I do not believe that our Motor Industry is resting on its laurels, but, of course, no manufacturer is prepared to disclose his future plans.

ROADS

I cannot let this meeting pass without a further reference to the Home Market and the suggested possibility of saturation. Saturation will not come because of lack of demand. It is more likely to arise from the irritations caused by the delays on our archaic roads and the inescapable effect which such delays have on the costs of every industry in Great Britain.

OVERSEAS

Year by year I mention our expansion programmes overseas. The Plant in Cape Town is now running very satisfactorily indeed, both for quality and cost, and we are in a position to take advantage immediately of any increased import quotas which may be made available by the Government of South Africa.

In Australia the installation of the most advanced type of automatic machinery for Engine and Transmission Production at the rate of 50,000 a year is proceeding, and should be completed during 1956. In addition plans have been passed and expenditure approved for a new Car Assembly Building and Paint Plant at Victoria Park, Sydney, to handle complete cars at the same rate. On the same site we are also making a start on the buildings for a large Press Plant for our subsidiary, Fisher & Ludlow.

Thus finally we shall have a complete factory at Victoria Park for the production of pressings, the manufacture of engines and the assembly, painting, finishing and despatch of Cars and Commercial Vehicles. At this stage our investment in this Plant alone will be between £4,500,000 and £5,000,000.

SPARES

The British Motor Industry is frequently criticized in the Press for lack of Spares abroad. This certainly is not true in the case of your Company. We have never opened up a new market, nor shipped new models of any kind anywhere in the world before we have sent to that particular territory sufficient spares to give service within twenty-four hours.

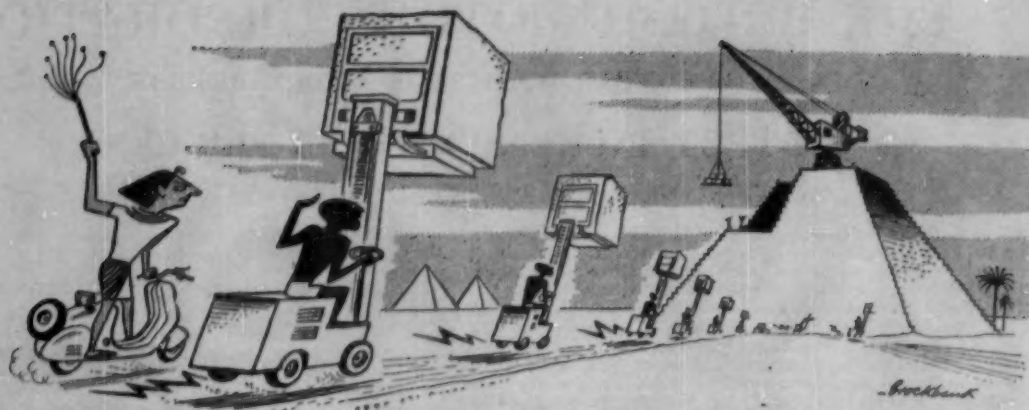
The production of both current and obsolete spares is rapidly increasing and a much more ample supply of spares of every kind is now available. Extensive new buildings have been put up at Cowley to cope with the extra volume, and additional staff is being engaged both in the factories and on the sales and distributive side.

THE FUTURE

There is no doubt that competition has become very much more severe in the last year and it will continue to do so. We have taken a chance in maintaining our selling prices at their present levels. This could mean reduced profits. Therefore, whilst I have little doubt that we shall be able to sell our output, including a proper proportion of it abroad, it would be unreasonable to expect profits in the current year to be higher than those disclosed for the year under review; in fact despite increased turnover they could conceivably be somewhat lower.

Our objective is always efficiency, coupled with the maximum rate of production. This enables us to offer the lowest possible selling prices consistent with high quality and dependable design and construction. We know that this is the only way to continued success, and so with the willing help of our suppliers and employees all over the world we look forward to the future with confidence.

The report and accounts were adopted.



They'd have jumped at the chance

Muscles ad lib. and Whips quant. suff.—that was the Pharaohs' formula for productivity. Simple, effective and—in those days—the quickest and cheapest way of raising a pyramid. They were nothing if not abreast of their times.

Now, manhandling is the dearest and slowest way. Wherever goods in production must be moved—lifted, carried, trundled, stacked—a quicker, cheaper way is available. This is the day of the versatile battery-driven electric truck.

How do we stand—6,500 years after the last whip cracked at Gizeh? We've mechanised industrial handling to quite an extent. But not to the full extent. Manhandling is still loading the price we must ask for the goods we make. £250 millions a year still waits to be saved by the

full use of mechanisation, and the consequent freeing of labour for its proper productive jobs.

Don't be too quick with the answer that starts: 'The saving is there, in theory, of course. But in my case the Capital Outlay . . .' Have you really worked out in detail, a fair conservative estimate of the Return? Do you realise that a single battery-driven light fork truck can do *all* the handling in an average light industry plant—including off-loading raw materials, stacking your stores to roof level and loading the lorries in the Despatch bay? That its 'fuel' cost, in terms of electric current consumed, is from 1d. a working hour? That the immensely long-lived battery truck is simpler to operate and cheaper to maintain than any other machine of its sort in the world?



Exide-Ironclad BATTERIES—a product of Chloride Batteries Limited

★The Company's Battery Traction Advisory Staff is always ready to discuss any aspect of electric traction

V65

CHLORIDE BATTERIES LTD • EXIDE WORKS, CLIFTON JUNCTION, SWINTON, MANCHESTER • Tel. SWINTON 2011
And at LONDON, Elgar 7991 • BRISTOL 22461 • BIRMINGHAM, Central 3076 • LEEDS 20248 • GLASGOW, Bridgeton 3734 • BELFAST 27953



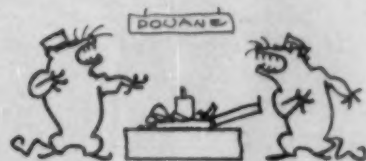
CHARIVARIA

FIRST come I. My name is Jowitt.

Is it legal? Then I know it.
Hopes for heroin dropped to zero.
I knew better. I'm the hero.

Vermin Allocation

ONLY airport, Paris, now idle for six weeks because of ground-staff strikes, has become infested with large rats, which are occupying offices and other



buildings. This state of things has been so widely reported in the French papers and is such a familiar topic of conversation throughout the country that political speakers in the election battle are arranging to draw lots for the exclusive rights to its metaphor yield.

Two More Mouths to Feed?

SUGGESTIONS that the behaviour of the Russian leaders during their badwill tour should be met by a withdrawal of our own invitation for the spring have coincided with other suggestions—that their conduct has not entirely found favour in Moscow itself, and that there is "speculation as to how long they will continue to hold down their jobs in the Kremlin." It may be, therefore, that their first move after the State procession down the Mall will be to ask for political asylum.

Nothing in the Papers

LAST week's headline "Nine Trapped in Blizzard" was fine and seasonable. More than four million breakfasters, reaching for another piece of hot toast, read with relish of the glider pilots "trapped by snow" on the top of a

cc

Shropshire hill, whipped by "howling blizzards," their path to safety "blocked by six-foot drifts piled up by the gales." After reading on below the useful map, however, breakfasters found that the imperilled party was not actually clinging by its teeth to an exposed col, but "warm and snug" in its Midland Gliding Club clubhouse, with "phone, radio and bar." They turned sullen and abrupt, and banged out to brave the bus-queues, the traffic, the sleet, the ice-patch, the smog.

Looking Up

MORE will undoubtedly be heard of the new long-range radio communication system just started up by U.S. Air Force experts in Oxfordshire, which is said to make possible the relaying of television programmes over great distances. At present reports are somewhat



blurred by technical jargon about beam-aerial systems, tropospheric forward propagation, voice channels, ionospheric scatter and so forth, but it does emerge that television programmes can be directed to a zone fifty miles above the earth's surface midway between the Chiltern Hills and Iceland, which seems an excellent place for most of them.

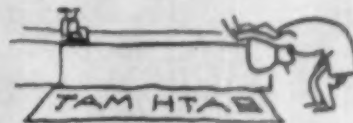
Good Money for Paupers

IT was inevitable that in the Welfare State a shortage of good works should set in, and the first warning sign comes with the report that a poor old people's Christmas treat planned in Kent has had to be called off because no poor old people could be found. The central and the municipal governments alike

should lose no time in giving thought to this matter. In a year or two, thousands of people accustomed to devote their lives to well-intentioned interference in the lives of others will find themselves with nothing to do, easy prey for unhealthy neuroses which could find desperate outlet in the anonymous letter, the bout of shop-lifting, the peep through a stranger's curtains. Then it will be too late. Action should be taken now to ensure a pool of old folk, orphans and others on whom the frustrated welfare worker can be let loose as the need arises. If supplies cannot be found through ordinary channels, perhaps Mr. Pickles, Mr. Winn, Mr. Lustgarten and other would-be monopolists in hard cases would agree to release their second serial rights.

Welcome, Stranger

NAMES in the foreign and Colonial news have become rather monotonous lately, with the Russian tourists well to the fore and Mr. Nehru close behind. The early brilliance is even wearing off U Nu. The election of a new Turkish Cabinet brought welcome relief last week, however, with such fresh political stars as Mumtaz Tarhan and Samet



Agaoglu, while thanks are due to Mr. Marshall, of Singapore, for opening the way to Press mention of the leader of the Negara Party—Dato Sir Onn bin Ja'Far.

No Hand-Grenades

THIS is the nostalgia age, and there are too many wistful murmurings about golden days gone by. But modern

times have their compensations, particularly during the brief season of goodwill. How many Victorian parents, lacking advice on what to buy their toddlers for Christmas, endangered their little limbs with two-handed saws, bewildered them with sets of Walter Scott or embarrassed them with stuffed fish? To-day the news-stands are rich in gift guidance. A glance at the *Evening Standard* alone tells not only what to buy, and how much to pay, but the reason why. Plastic buckets, for instance, are for eye and hand training, building-pyramids for co-ordination, canvas bags of smooth wooden bricks for developing constructive powers, plastic posting-boxes for eye-training in shapes and sizes. Parents are recommended to "avoid all minute, sharp articles" (a useful tip); also — of particular value to clairvoyants — "mechanical toys which break easily."

Return Ticket

THE Grand Old Doktor John
For freedom had a yen:
He took it into East Berlin
And took it out again.
And when he was red he was red
And when he was blue he was blue
But now that he's neither blue nor red
What the devil is he to do?

Singing *Deutschland über alles,*
Über alles in der Welt
Wenn es steht zum Schutz und Trutze
Westlich zusammenhält.



TIME like an Ever-rolling Stream



By P. G. WODEHOUSE

I MUST confess that often I'm
A prey to melancholy
Because I do not work on *Time*.
Golly, it must be jolly.
No other bliss, I hold, but pales
Beside the feeling that you're
One of nine hundred—is it?—males
And females of such stature.

How very much I would enjoy,
To call Roy Alexander "Roy"
And hear him say "Hullo, dear boy!"

Not to mention mixing on easy
terms with

Louis Banks
Richard Oulahan Jr.
Edward O. Cerf
Estelle Dembeck
Cecilia I. Dempster
Ed. Ogle
Robert Ajemian
Honor Balfour
Dorothy Slavin Haystead
Mark Vishniak
Old Uncle Fuerbringer and all.

The boys who run the (plural) *Times*
Are carefully selected;
Chaps who make puns or Cockney
rhymes
Are instantly rejected.
Each day some literary gem
By these fine lads is written,
And everyone considers them
A credit to Great Britain.

But dash it all—let's face it, what?—
Though locally esteemed as hot
For all their merits they are not,

Well, to take an instance at random,

Robert W. Boyd Jr.
Lester Bernstein
Gilbert Cant

Edwin Copps
Henry Bradford Darrach Jr.
William Forbis
Barker T. Hartshorn
Roger S. Hewlett
Carl Solberg
Jonathan Norton Leonard
Old Uncle Fuerbringer and all.

Alas, I never learned the knack
(And on *Time's* staff you need it)
Of writing English front to back
Till swims the mind to read it.
Tried often I've my darnedest, knows
Goodness, but with a shock I'd
Discover that once more my prose
Had failed to go all cockeyed.

So, though I wield a gifted pen,
There'll never be a moment when
I join that happy breed of men.

I allude to (among others)

Douglas Auchincloss
Louis Kronenberger
Champ Clark
Alton J. Klingen
Michael Demarest
Bernard Frizell
Theodore E. Kalem
Carter Harman
Robert Shnayerson
Harriet Bachman
Margaret Quimby
Elsie Ann Brown
Shirley Estabrook
Marion Hollander Sanders
Danuta Reszke-Birk
Deirdre Mead Ryan
F. Sydnor Trapnell
Yi Ying Sung
Content Peckham
Quinera Sarita King
Old Uncle Fuerbringer and all,
Old Uncle Fuerbringer and all.



STREPHON-GAITSKELL: "Down to the waist, I'm a Tory of the most determined description, but my legs are a couple of confounded Radicals."—*Ianthe*



"I had planned a little reconciliation scene."

Christmas for Foreigners

This leaflet was prepared by two members of the British Council staff at present under notice. It was hastily suppressed, but is reproduced here to add to the confusion.

ARE you one of the 547,000 Europeans, Americans, Lapps and Polish seamen flocking to Britain for the merriest-ever Christmas predicted by our Government? You are indeed lucky. For at this time of goodwill the British love of animals is extended to include the human race, and in a sense this means you. Don't be surprised, therefore, if as you mingle with the prosperous shopping crowds a stranger taps you on the shoulder. It will not be the secret police. It will be a householder who has taken pity on your fawn suit and Lavender homburg, and can't wait to have you as a guest at his fireside.

The following advice and information will show how best you may use this privilege.

First, you mustn't mind sleeping on an Army blanket in the apple-room. The house will be jammed with people because Dickens, the world's greatest novelist, who invented Christmas, liked handling crowd scenes. Besides you, as a foreigner, are used to roughing it. Your fellow guests will be your host's brother's family, your hostess's sister's family, and a Miss Bangle from the B.B.C. Monitoring Service. With true British impartiality and independence everybody will loathe everybody else, except Miss Bangle, who will get a

crush on you. By the way, Dickens also invented the idea of snow at Christmas. Actually the weather, as usual, will be muggy; but bring your skates to show you have read *Pickwick Papers*.

Do not, when asked to help decorate the house, jump for your beret and the distemper bucket. At Christmas we forget our flaking ceilings, and "decorate" merely means "render ornate according to the British knack for décor picked up during the Coronation." You will be given some wood-shavings, gold paint and baby-ribbon, and expected (because you look scruffy enough) to create an artistic Thing to hang in the hall. When you have

nearly finished this the family will tell you not to bother after all, as they've decided just to wedge holly behind the pictures, same as last year. Don't knock the berries off. Berried holly is dreadfully expensive here, because we share it with our feathered friends.

Don't attempt to help with the tree. Even an intelligent, i.e. British, stranger couldn't hang the ornaments on exactly like last year. Note, though, how the tree is nailed into the margarine box, and sometimes through into the floor or hall-stand.

Christmas gifts should not be a problem. We don't really go in for them now, for we are deeply conscious that in the Far East the standard of living is not what it might be. But, though you may not receive any presents, any you give will be appreciated. Remember our high taxation—the highest in the world—and stick to the dutiable stuff like whisky, cigarettes, good scent, or liqueur chocolates. Don't be shy of offering nylons brought from your own country—they will be

welcomed as not having cost you real money and being better than ours.

Christmas dinner is eaten at midday, which falls at half-past two. If you are a male foreigner and have been listening to the television as well as watching it (an irritating foreign habit) you may be saying "This Pheclip Arben—is it that in Britain the men prepare and cook the turkey and crystallized apricots while the women lounge in bed?" The answer is a typical British paradox: No.

You are at liberty to go to church before the meal—any church you like; but remember that these Christmas morning visits to "pubs" are undertaken more for the company than for the drinking. It strikes at the whole principle of British fair play to go off and get tighter before a meal than the meal itself could possibly have left you.

Our Christmas dinner is a feast indeed, but post-war-time shortages have left a psychological scar, so hang back from the white meat. And don't polish your plate with your bread. The only foreign eating-habit we

tolerate is the American fork one. We consider this high-class, with news value.

After dinner you go for a walk. Foreigners need exercise even more than dogs and children do. Leave your confounded camera behind; the British hate waiting about, except in queues. But take field-glasses, because of the rough-legged buzzards and other rare birds which now abound in Britain. Look keen when you are shown the new council houses, and don't be afraid of cows, or of filling your pockets with the decayed mice and wet leaves the children bring you. Here, truly, you will say, lies the quintessence of the British character—that love of nature which to countryman and town-dweller alike is an abiding inheritance. Change your shoes for tea.

After tea you will play Sardines with the children, i.e. you and Miss Bangle squeeze into a broom-cupboard. But after supper, when the children are in bed, you get the real fun: the grown-up games, of which there are two



kinds. For the first, "Clumps," you go out into the hall with Miss Bangle, who giggles and points up at the mistletoe. Your answer—that it looks nice, doesn't it, though it was a job hanging it there—hits by sheer chance on the British, or correct, attitude to sex, and demonstrates the purpose of "Clumps." The purpose of "Forfeits," the other game, where an uncle rams cold porridge down someone's neck while everybody else falls about with laughter, is to exemplify the British sense of humour. It saw us through the blitz, you may recall.

As you are beginning to understand, all our Christmas festivities are rooted

in the British character. For example, when infant beggars come to the front door and whine a German hymn, accompanying themselves on the knocker, every light in the house is instantly turned off and you must sit perfectly still, eating raisins, until they go away. Then when the lady of the house drops a plate and screams, it doesn't mean she has suddenly realized that her husband was unfaithful last Wednesday night: you are not on the Continent now. It means that the poor woman has either left the mince-pies in the oven or forgotten to switch on the Queen's speech. These happenings are known as national emergencies, designed

to show our genius for putting up with them if we can't get out of them.

But our greatest use for Christmas is as a testing-time for children. It is even better than the British public school system. We test how much food they will actually hold, how long they can keep awake without going out of their minds, and whether they can keep their dignity while strangers toss them high among the paper-chains and catch them just before they hit the floor. We test their inhibitions (a Briton's most valuable asset) by leaving them in a darkened bedroom waiting for the bearded man from the big store to fight his way out of the slow-combustion stove. And, finally, we test their sense of humour by constantly telling them they're having a wonderful time. Thus is built up the famous British mental stability typified by Livingstone, Byron and Calvin Coolidge.

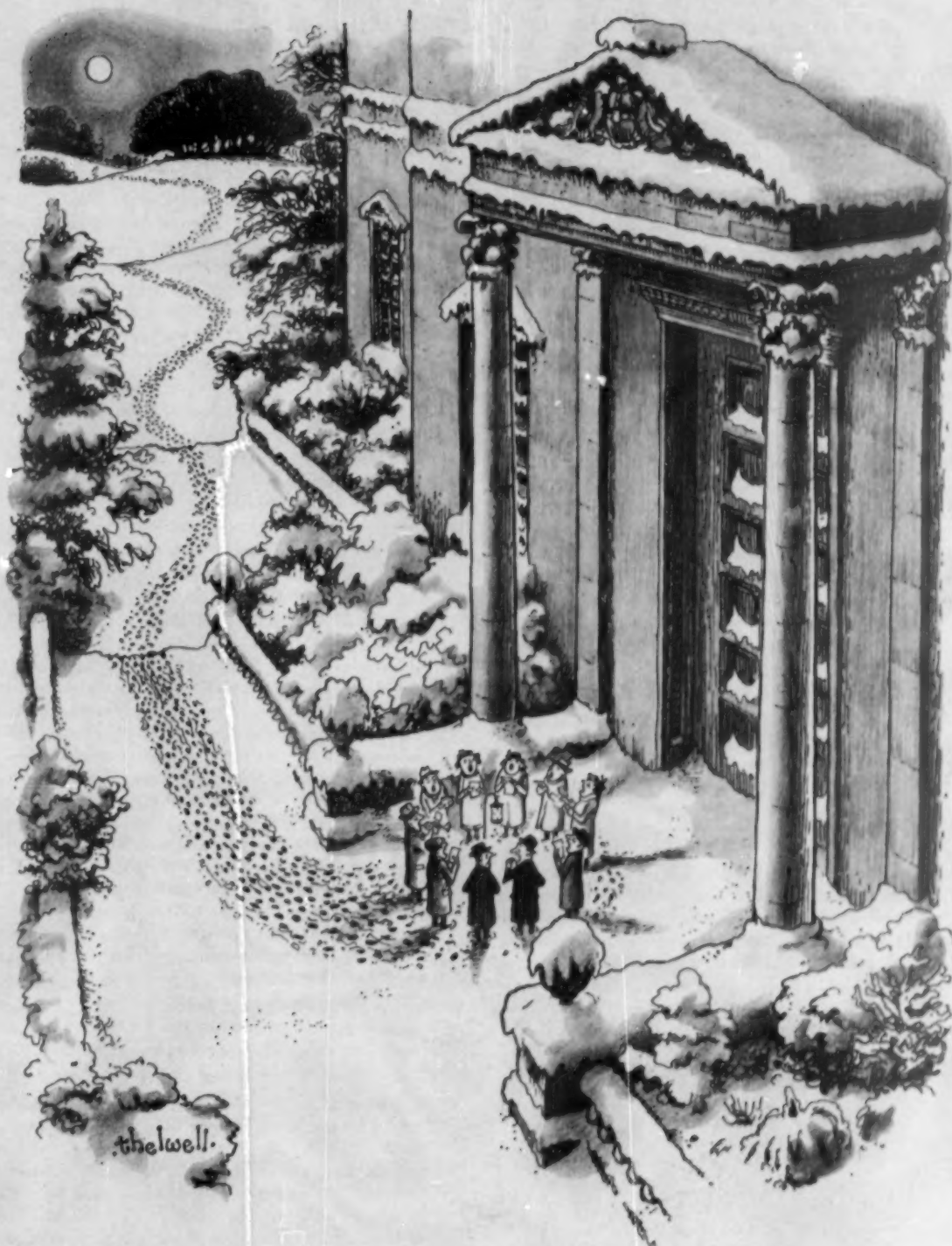
Last but not least, the pub stays open for Christmas evening, and you would hardly recognize it now. Old ladies sing "O Mein Papa" in close harmony. Old gentlemen savage the temporary barmaids. You order a small port and get it twenty-five minutes later in a pint glass rimmed with lipstick. In the alley outside, two white-faced corporals kick each other senseless because of a lady's honour, the lady meanwhile clawing their faces and tearing off her clothes. Small cigars are smoked, toasts are drunk to the Japanese bust of Churchill behind the bar, everybody tries to kiss the pretty Salvation Army girl who comes in selling papers, and the fat woman in the cardboard fez is just climbing on the table to do a high kick and show off her dimples when a crash outside indicates that someone has gone through the chip-shop window on to the sauce bottles arranged to spell out MERRY XMAS, and the police are coming.

If there is trouble, say you are a foreigner and ignorant of our baffling way of life. Though how our way of life can baffle anyone after all these years of plugging, heaven only knows.

ALEX ATKINSON and ANDE



"ST. PETER'S WIFE GETS DECREE"
East Kent Times and Broadstairs Mail
Stand by for a fresh Disestablishment
row.



"I've just been thinking—haven't they gone to live in the lodge?"

'Twas Christmas Day in the Kremlin

A shooting-script prepared for the I.T.A. by BERNARD HOLLOWOOD. From an original idea by Natasha Potemkin. Research by Larry and Pauline Baumgartner.

Titling, credits. Camera traverses backcloth of Kremlin. Snow is falling.

A VOICE: Before we proceed with the programme we should like to point out that the buildings depicted are not necessarily approved by the Supreme Praesidium for Soviet Architecture. At 20.00 hours on November 20 (after this programme had been devised) the Kremlin ceased to be a masterpiece and was reclassified as "Deviationist Rococo Monument, Second Class."

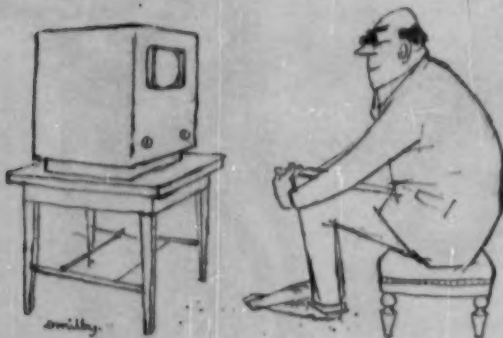
SPOT: *Good King Wenceslas looked out,
Down and out and weary.
Took a sip of "K.T. Wine":
Now he's feeling cheery.*

Film sequences shot by various British dramatic critics on recent mission to Moscow with "Hamlet."

A VOICE: The people of Moscow celebrate Christmas very much as we do in the West. Here you see them brushing snow in Red Square. The old lady on the left there comes from Kiev and has four sons. One, Nikolai, is joining a Soviet expedition to Red Antarctica; the others—Ilya, Aleksei and Valodya—are mining asbestos in the Urals. She is wearing a "Gamlet" snood and claims to have touched the hem of Kenneth Tynan's overcoat. To the right is a second sweeper . . .

SPOT: *Dinkum "Munchbiks" are the best,
The bestest and the moatest.
Dinkum "Munchbiks" pass the test—
Just ask any hostess!*

A VOICE: . . . a second sweeper. This morning he attended church in Manezhny Place and soon he will be crossing Moscow on the famous underground railway to eat Christmas dinner with Fyodr Chernovetz, a second cousin, who is food allocation supervisor in the Zlim auto works. It is a mistake to think of the Russians as godless. Religion is widely tolerated. There are not enough churches to accommodate everybody, so the young people politely stand aside and allow the old folks to worship in comfort. In the background, listening to Peter Brook, is a third sweeper, Elyena Vladimirovna.



SPOT: *Hark the Herald Angels sing;
They sing all night, they sing all day,
Keeping their throats and tonsils clean
With Benson's Medicated Oral Spray.*

The scene changes. Now we are within the very walls of the Kremlin, at a children's party organized by the Moscow "Bundles for India" relief committee. The children are sitting on the floor round an enormous Christmas tree. After numerous games of "Spin the Truncheon" and the old party favourite "Commissar's Knock" they are tired, very happy and ready to be entertained by the Russian Dancers (fresh from their triumphs in London) in "Song of the Partisans." The walls are decorated with enormous pictures of Santa Marx, Bulganin, Burgess, Khrushchev, Gandhi, Maclean and Stakhanov.

A storm of applause marks the end of the dance. Mr. Khrushchev and Mr. Bulganin enter side by side. They wear loincloths and sun-tan and carry banners marked "A Present from Bombay." They laugh immoderately and repeatedly dig each other in the ribs. Mr. Khrushchev mounts the rostrum.

SPOT: *I'm dreaming of a white Christmas,
White as white, white right through,
White as woolies washed in "Skrimp."
It's made by Foster Bros., of Crewe.*

MR. KHRUSHCHEV: Greetings, children of the Soviet Union. Greetings, too, children of the decadent and militant plutocracies of the West who through the miracle of television—which as we all know was invented by our great Russian scientist, Comrade Svetlanski—are able to join us this afternoon in our celebrations. To-day, children, I want you to forget our triumphant H-bomb tests, remembering only our humane decision to reduce radio-active fall-out by locating our experiments in the stratosphere, forget Britain's Hitlerite hordes and their ridiculous attempt to invade Mother Russia, forget Beria, forget the Wanderers of Wolverhampton and their detestable charging of our goalkeeper, forget the disgraceful shortfall in linseed oil production and the ideological backsliding of the Byelorussian railworkers' theatre. I want you to remember that you are having a wonderful time . . .

SPOT: *O come, all ye faithful
Purchasers of "Minty Chocs."
One-and-three a handy tube,
Four-and-six a great big box.*

MR. KHRUSHCHEV: . . . and that wonderful times have to be earned by the sweat of your brow. All over the world children this day are celebrating the triumph of Marxism and the Communist dialectic. In Burma children who were highly civilized at a time when their British overlords were woad-painted savages are paying their homage to Grandfather Frost. In India, a land long oppressed by the capitalist thugs of Britain, the children are building snowmen in the images of Little Father Lenin and Comrade Stalin. In China . . .



"Yes . . . yea . . . aye . . . good . . . granted . . . placet . . . to be sure . . . no doubt . . . undoubtedly . . ."

SPOT: *While Sherpas watch their flocks by night,
High on the slopes of old Nepal,
They think of Higgins' mattresses
And deep, deep sleep for one and all.*

Mr. Bulganin pokes Mr. Khrushchev in the ribs, hands him a glass of vodka. They laugh. Mr. Khrushchev then nods to the M.D.V. guards posted at the doors and apologizes to the children for keeping them from their entertainment. A young officer of the Komsomolka steps forward, recites Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade," and is rewarded by gales of laughter.

SPOT: *Jingle bells, jingle bells,
Woodbridge hall chimes at the door.
Woodbridge chimes have tone and class
And warmly welcome rich and poor.*

A VOICE: Children, we must not let this programme end without paying tribute to the great British Independent Television Authority that has made this exchange possible. The B.B.C., as you all know, is the mouthpiece of British capitalist reactionaries and colonizers. Why, only a few weeks ago this Corporation refused to allow our invincible Dynamo footballers to broadcast to Russia the story of their grim struggle against the forces of Wolves and Sunderland. The I.T.A. is locked in mortal combat with the loathsome giant of Portland Place and—like all underprivileged groups—has the unwavering support of the Soviet peoples. Greater glory to the I.T.A.! Long may the workers of Television House continue their struggle against the despotic idiocy and vile

criminality of the bourgeois-capitalist B.B.C. Independent viewers of the world—unite!

SPOT: *We three things of Orient are,
Ginger, figs and caviar.
Get us at the nearest store
With "Hopkinson's" upon the door.*

The party scene is faded. Leslie Mitchell in close-up. Gram. plays background music diminuendo. Overture to Glinka's "Ruslan and Ludmilla."

MITCHELL: And there we have it, ladies and gentlemen. We wish to thank all who took part in the programme, and in particular the speaker who spoke so warmly in support of the I.T.A. If I may I'd like to add a personal word or two about Anglo-Russian relations. Basically, I'm sure, our two peoples are in complete agreement and want nothing more than peace and prosperity. If at times we seem to differ it is because we are all part of one gigantic family of nations where friendly disagreements are as natural and ubiquitous as coughs and colds. ("Ruslan and Ludmilla" fades into "Land of Hope and Glory.") And so, ladies and gentlemen, as we say good-bye to Moscow, let us all repeat together the immortal lines of our beloved poet, ours and Russia's:

*Heigh-ho! sing heigh-ho! unto the green holly;
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly.
Then heigh-ho! the holly!
This life is most jolly.*

And now, ladies and gentlemen, we take you over to Sandringham . . .

Art for the Stomach

By LORD KINROSS

ART, nowadays, rears its pretty head everywhere. As the December twilight falls we draw the art curtains, turn on the art lamps, and sit down beneath the art decorations amid the chink of art teacups, around the art log fire. Art gives us not merely pretty homes but pretty wives, pretty children—sometimes even pretty guests. And to-day we can even serve them with food for art's sake. As the spring-time is, traditionally, the pretty pretty ring-time, so is Christmas now the pretty pretty food-time.

This blessing owes much to a Lady of Brompton, moreover a star of Television, named Payne. In an age of specialists—mental specialists, marriage specialists, drainage specialists and such—she has set herself up as a Party Specialist. As Mrs. Spry, the Lady of Mayfair, responds to the call of the party with pretty flowers, so Mrs. Payne responds with pretty food. She is an artist whose plate is her palette. She makes pictures with food, thus enabling us not merely to eat the thing we love but to eat the thing we admire.

"One really," says Mrs. Payne lovingly to lookers, "must love one's kitchen for itself." Loving it as a painter her studio, she acts to work in it not with paints but with meats and fruits and fishes, butters and sauces and cheeses, peels and pulps and vegetable tintings, lovingly blending the colours to create still-lives you could eat. Dressing up, for the Party Specialist,

means dressing up not guests but hams. No functionalist she, but a Romantic Impressionist. Give her a functional sardine and in a trice, like Cinderella, it is transformed by a party dress, with a piping of butter and a girdle of red pimento.

Give her a loaf and she converts it into a decorative "treasure chest," bursting with colourful sandwiches. A tiny tomato becomes the heart of a flower, with cream cheese petals. ("Isn't it a little poppet?") A prawn becomes the heart of another, with petals of finely-cut slices of radish. Pink arum lilies, in a bowl of pastry, have petals of smoked salmon, stamens of the flesh of cucumber, leaves of its peel. Asparagus is served in garden baskets, prettily woven from cheese-straw wickerwork. Cream cheese is blended with the pulp of a cucumber to make canapés of a rare translucency. Spinach juice dyes butter "rather a heavenly shade of green."

"Highly spectacular" is a Technicolor rice dish, saffron yellow, pea-green and vermillion, adorned with the feelers of a lobster, the bone in its claw wired into a "mother-of-pearl" flower, with petals of mussel shell and leaves of camellia, set amid posies of tiny radishes and mushrooms. ("We put an octopus on top once, but it looked rather pooky.") The studio *chef d'œuvre*, however, is a Crown of Thorns intricately fashioned from spiced turkey, with a cranberry mould in the centre.

"What a shame," we think, "to spoil so lovely and moving a picture!" And then we spoil it.

For the young, now known as teenagers ("Poor pets! It makes my heart ache to see them at a party"), there must be an outlet for embarrassment, a conversation-substitute, something to Do with their Hands. Hence a miniature barbecue—the heart of a cabbage; a lamp, perhaps a cigar-lighter, within it; miniature

spits for the teen-agers to turn on it, toasting cheese, chipolatas, bacon, thawing and laughing and even talking as they do so. The lucky dips of to-day are garlic dips, mustard dips, Camembert dips, sesame dips, with sausages, nuts, fingers of celery to dip in them.

Actors and actresses prefer their food down-to-earth, undressed ("Poor pets, they see enough dressing-up on the stage"); also enormous chunks of pastry. Likewise the sages of the TV panel, fed on a Sunday lunch of game pie and sucking-pig to stimulate their Freedom of Speech.

Like all true artists Mrs. Payne is modest about her art. "I'm afraid it sounds rather frightful," she says of her sculpture, a wall of cheese with mosaic inlay of green capers and maraschino cherries. No such modesty afflicts the mammoth party-organizers, their Corner Houses all galleries of art food.

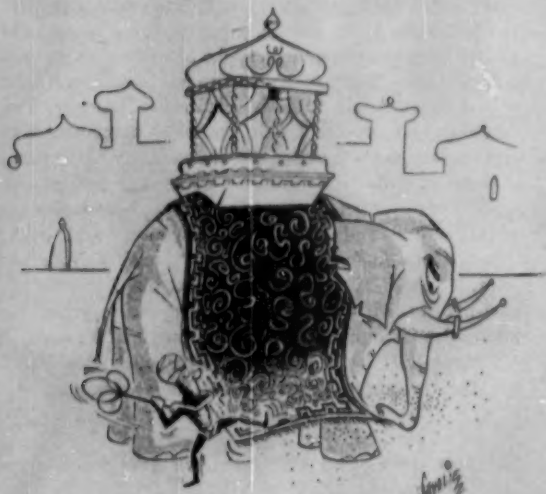
Sculpture is their speciality. For the circus party, apart from waitresses dressed as beasts, there is a sea-lion carved from a block of ice, an electric ball rotating on its ice-cold nose; for the oil party oil derricks, tankers and crackers (catalytic), carved out of sugar; for the steel party ice steel-tubing, forty feet long; for the regimental dinner an ice cooker, with sausages sizzling in an ice frying-pan.

For the nursery, moreover, together with the usual wonder gâteaux, Green Line buses full of mints, TV sets bursting with milk chocolate, meringue snowmen and meringue pussy-cats, chocolate money and chocolate express trains, there are now iced Father Christmases and iced teddy bears. Father to the man, the child too thus eats the thing he loves and admires.

"Lady Foot, was an interested spectator at Knutsford Park, Monday afternoon, when the Junior Cup match between St. Elizabeth and Hanover was played. Immediately after her arrival she walked over the referee, Warner Bolton, shook hands and commiserated with him on his recent injury which kept him out of the tournament."

The Jamaica Daily Gleaner

One way of keeping him out of another.



Musical and Dramatic

THE doctor's wife, the dentist's wife, the curate's wife and I
Used to appear three times a year, in happier days gone by,
Down at the Town Assembly Rooms—for in between the wars
The Musical and Dramatic Society played without a pause.

Nobody sends bouquets to-day
The way they used to do;
Nobody's taken a curtain call
Since 1932—
People prefer to see TV,
Glued at home to a glittering set . . .
We've discovered with real regret
How easy it was for the town to forget
The doctor's wife, the dentist's wife, the curate's wife
and me.

A single set (3m., 4f.), a plot not too profound
We much preferred to things absurd as Theatre in the Round;
Drama festivals weren't for us, and we were proud enough
To cry "To hell with the B.D.L. and the Maddermarket
stuff!"

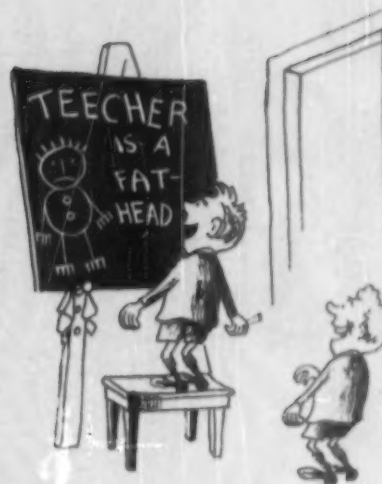
Nobody wants to hear us sing,
Nobody shouts "Encore!";
Amateur musical comedy now
Is reckoned a bit of a bore—
The public's taken it into its skull
That going to see *The Student Prince*
Only produces a critical wince,
And even the President's muttering hints
That country girls and Quaker girls and geisha girls are
dull.

From *Rookery Nook* to *Journey's End* and *Whiteoaks* up to
Thark

Patrons applauded our plays without a single rude remark;
We must confess the local Press would leave us rather pained
Unless it recorded that "Every rôle was zestfully sustained."

Nobody queues to watch us now,
Nobody rolls in the aisles;
All we get is a titter or two
And a few encouraging smiles—
And ever since 1923
All the leading feminine parts
(Dames and duchesses down to tarts)
Have had to rely on the slender arts
Of the doctor's wife, the dentist's wife, the curate's wife
and me.

ANTHONY BRODE



Sprod



Homer Nodded Here

By CLAUD COCKBURN

EXHIBITIONS of rage are at almost all times welcome and pleasant, and when they occur in accordance with custom and hallowed tradition, especially so. Which is where Sydney Goodsir Smith, poet, has done the right thing. What he is in a rage about is the thing he thinks, rightly or wrongly, is happening to the poet Burns.

As is universally known, once a year in January people all over the Universe meet to honour the memory and recall the achievement of Burns. This happens anyway, but it is normally expected that at some date decently in advance of these celebrations someone should exclaim, denounce, and declare with ill-disguised disgust that the memory of Burns is being exploited, commercialized, dragged at the chariot wheels of this or that.

This year this opening part of the ceremony was left unusually, even, some thought, dangerously late. There were those who feared that yet one more time-honoured etc., etc., was going down the drain.

The alarm was unjustified. Sydney Goodsir Smith had the matter in hand. His rage came up in plenty of time and was only waiting for the winter issue of the *Saltire Review* to be put in action. It was an especially high-class rage because it wasn't just about the ordinary

annual celebrations but about the super-one planned for 1959 to mark the bi-centenary of Burns' birth, which, many hope, will send the hard-currency customers whizzing north so fast that Stratford-on-Avon will appear as a mere blur, and knock the Irish Tourist Board for six.

"Because the Burns Federation have mummified Burns," cries Goodsir Smith, "because they are manifestly not interested in the living body of Scottish literature, but are only a sort of necrophagists, corpse-eaters devouring the symbolic cadaver [the haggis] at their ritual banquets before hearkening to the prescribed canticles and prayers, it must be apparent that they are hardly the most suitable ambassadors to deal with the kind of educated European or American who is likely to take the trouble to visit a literary festival."

It is the responsibility of the Burns Federation, says Mr. Smith sternly, "not to make a laughing stock of Scotland for the sake of the Scottish Tourist Board."

All this came as a pleasant jolt to those who had forgotten about a haggis being a symbolic cadaver, and in addition Goodsir Smith sweetened the atmosphere by pointing out, in a spirit of fair play and considered judgment, that "Of course we are not unique; England has its Stratford-on-Avon,

which is a more vulgar display of unashamed daylight robbery than anything in Scotland."

The number of men who are prepared to state in public that they are positively in favour of vulgar display, unashamed daylight robbery and necrophagy is small, and it was to be expected that a majority would devote a couple of minutes of their time to saying "Absolutely," "It's a scandal," and "Take that poet out of your mouth at once," before returning to the job of seeing how far Burns can be tapped for a further posthumous contribution to the hotel business.

On second thoughts, a good many good men in Edinburgh were saying this week that after all there seems no compelling reason to let poets, saints, etc., off this type of contribution, which would appear to be a rather painless kind of tax so far as they are concerned.

If there were any likelihood of some international agreement under which the saints and singers would all get out of the Tourist industry at the same time, and stay out of it for a couple of years, that might be a solution. Were Shakespeare and St. Patrick, for example, to stand down, it would be reasonable to ask Burns to do the same.

But nobody acquainted with the facts supposes that either of the first two named are likely to do anything of the kind, and even if they did, next thing you know there would come news of a smart double-cross by Goethe, and everyone would be running off with





"I understand they're sacred."

their dollars to Weimar. And who on earth is to say that Burns himself would have objected to his present employment? Shakespeare doesn't, he's in there pitching all the time.

A leading Scottish writer (living) with whom I discussed the latest developments on the Burns front gave it as his opinion that on the whole it's nicer for leading writers (dead) to be remembered simply because otherwise the souvenir trade would slump and many boarding-houses close, than not to be remembered at all.

All very well to ask where would the Lake District be without Wordsworth, but where, one may also inquire, would Wordsworth be without the Lake District publicity men to keep him

going? Way down among the Brownings, as like as not.

Before there were motor-coaches to take people to Freshwater, Isle of Wight, hardly anyone had heard of Tennyson for years, and a year or so after the death of Dylan Thomas people started going to Wales. So far from doing harm to poets, this sort of thing does them a bit of good.

Goodsir Smith should possibly think back to the time, not of so very yore, when nobody noticed poets and others of the writin' and paintin' set simply because nobody could see what possible use they were, and you got familiar situations like King George's remark to Gibbon about scribble, scribble, scribble eh? True, you also had a writer here

and there trying to look useful, claiming big practical effectiveness, such as the song-writer who said "Let who will write a nation's laws, so I may write its songs," but very few took him seriously, and still devoted their main time and money to trying to nobble M.P.s and senior Civil Servants.

There were a few jobs where a poet or someone of that kind could do a useful stint, as, for instance, writing "Rule, Britannia!" but by and large it was Tourism which sent poets' stock up to where it stands to-day, because it was only Tourism which showed how handy a high-grade, properly attested poet can come in.

Ail I can say to Goodsir Smith is: If this be necrophagy, make the most of it.

May I Have t



the Pleasure?



Valse Triste

By LESLIE MARSH

FATHER, dear Father, come home with me now . . .

Yes, you know the song, you old fogey. Are you sure? How does it go on? As a variation from Christmas quizzes and consequences, count one for each of the twenty-six following lines you can remember and consider your memory maladjusted or a bad mixer if you score less than ten.

The modern song life-cycle is a whirl; it has to be because the hungry generations are treading so fast behind. No sooner has the lyric-writer achieved success than he tinks he tees another smash hit a-creeping up on him, and

he is right, it is, and soon they are both forgotten. When the melody lingered on, long before the radio era, for ten or twenty years or more, some songs, it seemed, could never be forgotten. They had been heard so often that, like a bit of repetition learned at prep school, they had become life sentences. Then, to show what a silly word unforgettable is, along comes Mr. Willson Disher with *Victorian Song*, a new book about old ballads, among them that greatest of all musical temperance tracts quoted above.

It is worth preserving both as a social document and as a guide to the fiction-

writing taught in the old schools, for it has the three requisites, drama, conflict, suspense. The first verse continues:

*Father, dear Father, come home with me now,
The clock in the steeple strikes one.
You promised, dear father, that you would come home
As soon as your day's work was done.
Our fire has gone out, our house is all dark,
And mother's been watching since tea,
With poor brother Benny so sick in her arms,
And no-one to help her but me.
Come home, come home, oh father, dear father, come home.*

There is everything here for the sociologist: cost of living, occupational hazards, domestic service, licensing hours, all the graph and diagram paraphernalia. Whatever the man was drinking—beer or gin at that time, nearly a hundred years ago would be a reasonable guess—was costing him, say, 1½d. or 2d. a pint or 2d. a single nip. Tea after the day's work was a loosely-timed hearty meal, not the insipid five o'clock dalliance, and if served much after six o'clock would probably have been called supper, so this gives the man seven hours' steady drinking, and I don't see him as a slow, solitary, meditative sipper. Assuming, say, a convivial round among a few cronies every twenty minutes or so, father had spent the best part of seven shillings by 1 a.m., and this was real money then for a man who, on the evidence, had no home help and cut the coal and candle allowance fairly fine.

If any memory test candidates survived the first round, here is the second:

*Father, dear Father, come home with me now,
The clock in the steeple strikes two.
The night has grown colder, and Benny is worse,
But he has been calling for you.
Indeed he is worse and likely to die
No doubt before morning shall dawn,
And this is the message I've come here to bring,
"Come quickly or he will be gone."
Come home, come home, oh father, dear father, come home.*

The fascinating factor here (I pass over the dawn-gone rhyme) is the distance from the house to the inn. When that sad little face appeared at the window or door (I take it the child



did show herself somehow, because a girlish treble outside in the road could scarcely have got over above the bar hubbub, remembering that they had been at it for eight hours now) the singer had, in less than an hour, gone home, stayed long enough to assess her brother's condition in some detail, and hurried back. Careful timing was essential. The girl had the makings of a real old trouper to be there on the spot, waiting for sound cue for number from steeple. The effect would have been miserably ragged if the bar clock, probably then, as now, a few minutes fast, had wheezed out a quarter chime at 2.10 for 2.15, at "clock in the steeple strikes two." The girl was no dawdler, for this was well in advance of the popular bicycling age.

There is also the problem of the inn-keeper's very free hospitality. True, there were no statutory closing hours then, but sooner or later a man had to clear the decks to wash up, count the till, tidy round a bit after a very long session, snatch a little sleep and be ready to open up again in the fast approaching morning. And for another solid hour there was still no nagging talk of "Come along, you gentlemen, please," for read on:

Father, dear Father, come home with me now,

*The clock in the steeple strikes three.
The house is so lonely, the night is so long
For poor weeping Mother and me.
Yes, we are alone for Benny is dead,
And gone to the angels of light,
And these were the very last words that he said,*

"I want to kiss Papa good-night."

Come home, come home, oh father, dear father, come home.

Even now, with all the pathos at the other end of the village, the show had to go on. The landlord was still the faithful servant of the public. His house was far from lonely and his night was getting unbearably long, but no one was yet saying a word about going home except that girl outside, probably only an off-license customer, if that, even on happier occasions.

"Father, Dear Father" was so popular, Mr. Willson Disher tells us, that it was arranged as a waltz. "Did he ever foresee," Mr. Disher asks, "how immortal these verses would prove to be or imagine that well-meaning people could laugh at them?"

Immortal? Well, how many points did you score?



Greasy Joan

WHERE is the pot that greasy Joan was keeling
When the owl booted? I should say it must
Have stemmed with grease the ravages of rust
And now be hanging from some tea-shop ceiling
In or near Stratford, artlessly appealing
To tourists drinking tea. But Joan is dust,
And dust the man who watched her keeling, feeling
Three parts affection and one part disgust.

The symbolised subsists, the symbol merges
In changing facts. Joan has become a treasure,
Diverse detergents leaving her exempt
From keeling. But amused affection purges
Guilt; and the clinging residue of pleasure
Cannot be keeled except with our contempt.

P. M. HUBBARD

A Good Day at The Prawn and Limpet

By ANTHONY CARSON

I WAS trying to think about working, and I had thought in nearly all the pubs in Brighton, the ones like aquariums, like railway stations, the ones with the old Army men and the huge grim women with double gins, and I even thought three nights in the jazzy, tubular-lit cider bars with the draught-cider boys, before I discovered the "Prawn and Limpet." It's down Hove way, next a souvenir shop and a cockle-stand, and you could almost spit into the sea from the doorway when the tide was in. There was a tang of all my escape routes about it.

I was first drawn to it by the noise, like a screech of sick owls, spiralling from the piano organ, and a sea-sick voice singing "When Irish Eyes are Smiling." Outside the door were dour men in caps and enormous women in paper hats and children with minnows and giggling girls and drunken sailors and dogs. Directly I walked in a huge wooden box was pushed in front of my face. The box was on the end of a pole, had a slit in the middle, and had "THANK YOU" painted on one side. At the other end of the box I saw an obsessed shark-like face. "What's that for?" I asked. "Music," said the shark. "But I've only just walked in," I said. "What about theatres?" shouted the

shark. I put sixpence in the slit and the shark went back to the piano organ and the sea-sick woman sang "When Irish Eyes are Smiling" for the second time. She sang it five times and everybody was shouting, because they all wanted to get to the microphone and sing "Bless This House" or "Stranger in Paradise." At the end of the fifth time there was a free fight, and the chucker-out leapt over the counter and knocked out three youths and the husband of Smiling Irish Eyes. The publican picked up the telephone and dialled a number. "Is that the hospital?" he said. "'Prawn and Limpet' here. Will you collect?"

I ordered a stout. Beside me was a short man with a face as quick as a lizard. He nodded. "Pretty quiet," he said. "Oh," I said. "Not like the old days," he said. "You often here?" I asked. "I'm the drummer," he said. "We stop playing during fights. If we play during the fights the police can nab us." "Have a drink," I said. He sucked down some wallop. "The publican always says 'Play up, boys' to drown the din, but not bloody likely." I could hear a dog-fight outside the door, and the collecting box was shoved in front of my face again. "Lay off, Charlie," said the drummer. The box rattled away. "Three years ago," said the drummer, "Charlie's box was only as long as my hand. It's grown like a dream ever since. Must be six times bigger. And it hadn't got a pole then." He drank some more wallop. "Sleeps with it," said the drummer.

I looked out at the sea. It was stormy and the waves seemed to be threshing up to the door. The dogs were growling in the distance, and the fat women were doing "Knees Up, Mother Brown." "It's a funny sort of business," said the drummer. "It's got its own rules. Sometimes

you think 'Where do you go from here?' You know when you get a sniff of the Grand life. I think of myself toggled up slick under the spots, tapping and singing, and an arm of star girl in the bright night. And oysters. You get sick of the seaweed and the groynes and the old bed-sit and 'Knees Up, Mother Brown' with the smell of onions. Nothing ever happens here." I nodded. "There's an iron wall between me and all that, but there's a special sort of laugh here, it even creeps up on me and gets under the bedclothes. Look at Bob, there, the chucker-out." I looked at Bob. He could have stepped right out of a magazine, he was liked a caged tiger. "What about Bob?" I asked, watching the sea and the dogs out of the corner of my eye. "He'll be singing in a moment," said the drummer. "That always means trouble. No one can stop Bob singing. Not even the guv'nor. Everyone's got to be as quiet as a prize-giving, even the dogs. Just one wrong look and he's off the platform and it's right-left everywhere." We had another drink. "Of course for them that knows, a nod is a wink." I looked round the bar and saw it had filled up with sailors walking slantwise, as they walked into Plymouth, Gib, or rough weather. Spray was blowing in through the door. The pianist, carrying his money-hearse, got to the piano, pulled out the organ stops and blew high eye-watering riot. It got into your kidneys. "Back to work," said the drummer with a wink.

Bob, the chucker-out, marched on the microphone, flailing through a field of sailors. I'LL SEE YOU IN MY DREAMS, he cried, HOLD YOU IN MY DREAMS, he cried, his eyes raking the room for sneers, SOMEONE STOLE YOU OUT OF MY ARMS, he cried, and then a drunken A.B. guffawed. He had guffawed in Panama, yes, in Oran, yes, up and down the Med he had guffawed, but he would be careful how he guffawed again. Bob jumped off the platform, the drummer ran from his drums, the pianist grabbed his money-box, the guv'nor dialled the hospital number. It was near high tide and a great wave came up to the door. You could have fished from the counter. Bob was smashing right and left and long sailors were rolling, and right up the other end of the bar



the fat women were still hard at Mother Brown, lifting their great unmagical knees. "Thank you, thank you very much," shouted the pianist, rattling his money box, a cold mad silver stare in his eyes. Then he ran to the door, looked out.

I was ordering another stout when suddenly the piano organ blasted into life again. I'LL WALK BESIDE YOU, cried the pipes, and then gave a gasp and died. The pianist was running for the door. Bob had stopped fighting the sway of sailors, wiped blood out of his eyes, shouted "The bastard's running off with the box." He, too, ran and the water was creeping into the bar. A hand pulled at my arm. It was the drummer. "Come on, beat it," he said. "Quick. The coppers."

We waded through the water; past the cockle-stand, up the steps on to the front. "How do you know it was the coppers?" I asked, panting. "Charlie gave us the tip," said the drummer. "On the organ. I'LL WALK BESIDE YOU. It's the Nark's anthem." "I see," I said. We walked together in silence for a while. "By the way," said the drummer in a casual voice, "do you know anyone on I.T.A.?"

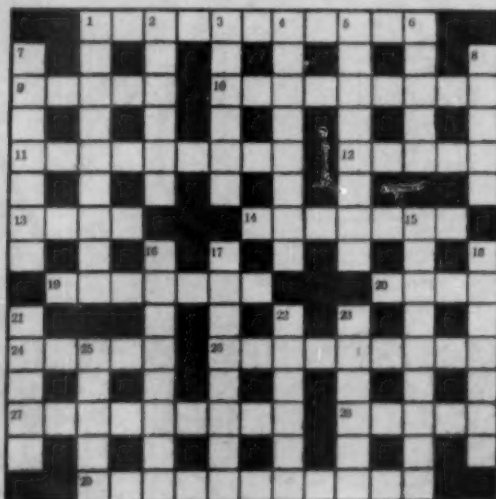


"We forgot to get the onions."

Christmas Crossword

ACROSS

1. He's an ace though it seems you pull out a lower card. (11)
9. Demon King in Aladdin? (5)
10. Not the Bounty; a more savoury craft at turkey time. (9)
11. She-ass can run wild south of the border. (9)
12. One of 8, followed by three, but comes out in the daytime. (5)



13. Wide of the mark, muddled, these doctrinaire theories. (4)
14. We all ought to be at this time of year if wishes come true. (7)
19. AI gases? That's a mere conventional weapon. (7)
20. Gift store with branches everywhere. (4)
24. 20 is on 'The Day. (5)
26. The hymnsingers—and children—are on 'The Day. (9)
27. Look-out man. (9)
28. Can be sung or stood at festivities. (5)
29. What the house needs, prematurely, on or before Twelfth Night. (11)

DOWN

1. The object of this exercise. (9)
2. Air transport horn that the driver never sounds. (6)
3. VE Day puzzled him. (6)
4. How we will (ill-advisedly) carve the turkey? (8)
5. Fit after grace has been said? That's an agreeable state to be in on 'The Day. (8)
6. Used by Soviet drivers of 16? (5)
7. What a clot to be in mourning at this time—can't he carry his liquor? (7)
8. They rise and shine. (5)
15. Invariably carries his bat and plays Rugger too. (9)
16. No need to beware of them when they bring gifts. (8)
17. A rousing noise, especially for parents at first light on 'The Day. (8)
18. Stockings here and 500 things beside. (7)
21. 15's foil. (5)
22. How can that crazy beetle have got into the wine? (6)
23. England in German. (6)
25. End is in sight when one does on 'The Day. (5)

Solution next week



At the vast new Minkhampton House . . .



everything's large and lavish . . .



except, of course . . .

the . . .

passenger-lifts . . .

and . . .



also . . .

the . . .

flats . . .

themselves.



In the Country

A Devonman's Christmas

YOU will probably have noticed that every village and hamlet in Devonshire has at least two chapels, even when they do not contain a shop or a pub. We are a particularly Christian county and therefore it is not surprising that our festivities at Christmas should bring out our concern with spiritual values and reflect those moral convictions which we hold so tenaciously.

Of these, of course, good neighbourliness is the first; and consequently it is a tradition amongst us when we go out to collect holly to restrict our foraging expeditions exclusively to our neighbours' woods, though our own may be burdened with the berry. Nothing makes our Christmas more than the feeling that we pinched our decorations right under so-and-so's eye.

Our Christmas fare is on these lines too, and it's a poor man in Devonshire who can't sit down to a dinner in which the goose hasn't been conveniently run over and most of the vegetables bagged from the vicar's garden. It is not that we have no geese, fowls or turkeys of our own. But no good farmer eats what he can sell.

Naturally, in the very fount of teetotalism, our Feast is abstemious. There is no burgundy with the roast; if we indulge in a drink we do it on the sly so as not to seduce others into habits that only we can afford. Nor do we douse our pudding with brandy. If the children insist on seeing the flames a drop of paraffin can do them no harm.

And at any rate the children have their toys. Did we not go to the Chapel Jumble Sale a month ago and invest a couple of pounds buying second-hand toys on the cheap? Neither economy nor meanness was our motive: it is necessary to support the Jumble Sale, the funds of which go to the Women's Outing. If those takings aren't up to the mark, a man has to take his wife out alone, which entails diving even deeper into his pocket.

It does seem a shame that after all the sacrifices we make, children are never satisfied. There the brats sit yelling on the cold stone flags, a picture

of brattish ingratitude though surrounded by their only two toys until we tell them to stop snivelling and go out and play.

"Play what?"

"The Devil."

At that they go out gaily for they know what I mean—though the little innocents are not aware of the implications. But it's a fact that it's a tradition in our village to bait the aged and infirm at this time of year with a little innocent fun. The old miller is most susceptible to the joke. All the children have to do to drag him out of his cottage screaming blue murder at them is to take a few boughs of elderberry and mix it up with his pile of firewood.

The fact that we believe that our Lord was crucified on a cross made out of elderberry wood may of course explain the joke. And to this day anybody who burns elderberry is certain to go to Hell. Of course I

could stop the children. But since it is obvious to me that the whole thing is a silly myth I don't feel I can make the effort. After all a cross of elderberry could bear no man's weight. It's a brittle wood.

But this Christmas we must break with some of our traditions. Previously we have always kept Boxing Day for ferreting our neighbours' hedges. All through the winter we kept our ferrets slim and fit for this occasion. But now there are no rabbits. Myxomatosis has cleaned them out and quite spoiled our Christmas sport. This leaves us at a loose end; we shall have to invent other pastimes such as connecting the electric fence up to the postmistress's iron grill, or just stuffing wet straw down the curate's chimney.

If anybody doubts that I am a true Devonian he has his proof that I am in my facility for libel.

RONALD DUNCAN



In the City

Holidays With Strings

A YOUNG friend of mine has returned from a consultation (fee one shilling) with Santa Claus in a mood of disenchantment. The old man had dealt with her breathless demand with perfunctory abruptness and, far worse, in the broken English of an Italian immigrant. A genuine Father Christmas, as every child knows, hails from the frozen north, talks like someone out of Galsworthy, and has snow on his boots: he is not a garlic-scented Latin. This year the arrival of Santa Claus has been complicated by full employment and a chronic shortage of unengaged, reasonably able-bodied males of Nordic stock, and I am told that Italians, Maltese and even West Indians have been pressed into service by harassed department stores.

Christmas is getting out of hand. A Keynes would organize the feast according to economic exigencies. In a period of recession and industrial sluggishness the celebrations would be boosted by

powerful Government propaganda. There would be bonus issues all round from the National Insurance funds, extra holidays with pay, subsidies on greetings cards, crackers, toys, ties and crystallized fruits. There would be Treasury grants for pantomime bazaars and charades, and free allocations of feeding-stuffs to turkey-fatteners. New sixpenny-pieces would be offered at cut rates for pudding fanciers.

But in an economy stretched almost to bursting point (as now), where restraint in domestic spending is essential, where inflation must be quashed, productivity improved, imports stepped up, and manpower used to maximum advantage, our Keynes would call for yuletide temperance. No new coins would be minted, Christmas cards, mottoes, streamers and so on would be rationed and a prohibitive tax would be levied on false whiskers, cotton wool and artificial snow.

Christmas comes but once a year, thank heavens, but it takes an unconscionable long time a-coming. Thousands of workers are employed the whole year through on the manufacture of the novelties and fripperies which are now considered essential outward and visible signs of the festive spirit. As soon as the summer holidays are over the Christmas clubs open their subscription lists, the catalogues begin their rounds, the big stores get to work with papier mâché, cotton wool and tinsel, and the orgy of C-day looms ahead. Only 369 more days to next Christmas.

MAMMON



THE custom of the House of Commons requires the Speaker to call a Privy Councillor, whenever he rises in his place, in preference to any other Member. Nine Privy Counsellors took advantage of this privilege in the Middle East debate on Monday, and between them these Nine Bright Shiners—whose names—Macmillan, Morrison, Elliot, Dalton, Davies, Shinwell, Henderson, Robens, Eden—are, as Rossetti would have said, nine "sweet symphonies"—contrived to occupy four hours and forty-two minutes of the House's time (to adopt the valuable and laborious calculation of the admirable Mr. Donnelly). One could hardly imagine a more effective exposure of the absurdity of last week's contention that the House of Commons was "the grand forum of the nation." Mr. Donnelly did well to raise the point after Questions on Tuesday. He has put down a motion to change the custom of the House in this respect. The motion has support from Members in all parties, and let us hope that it will meet with success.

Frontier Force

Among these Privy Counsellors Mr. Walter Elliot said "Our statement that we shall take action if any attempt is made to violate those frontiers by force should be explored further. A working party of the three states should be set up to elucidate their responsibilities and, if possible, to state their intended aims." Since at the very moment of his speaking the frontiers were being violated in a pitched battle between Israel and Syria and since they are violated almost every day, it was not easy to see what function the working party could fulfil

when it got there, save that perhaps of Target for To-night.

We have up till now kept a precarious peace—if peace it can be called—by preserving a balance of arms between the two sides. That balance is now being upset by the Czech deliveries to Egypt. Shall we attempt to preserve it by further deliveries to Israel? "In our view this cannot be put right," says Mr. Macmillan, "by the Western Powers themselves deciding to send a balancing supply of arms to Israel." "We should try to maintain a balance of arms . . ." said Sir Anthony Eden only three weeks before, "and that is what we have done without doubt ourselves and

to the best of our ability with our French and American Allies."

Mr. Morrison brought out this contradiction, but it was the speech of an old man, handicapped by the burden of years and the support of Lord Beaverbrook, and the point was made with an utter lack of vigour. With the silent benches round him he clearly saw and felt the shadow of defeat. The bitter sky, cruel as it was that day, did not bite so high as the benefits forgot on his own back-benches, and it was left to Mr. Dennis Healey to make the speech of the debate. He argued that to leave everyone uncertain of British policy was the most dangerous of all



Nine bright shiners.

expedients—a temptation to the Israeli to attack while the balance was still momentarily on their side—a temptation to the Egyptians to attack before the policy was clarified. By hinting at terms for the Arabs more favourable than they were offered before the Czech arms deal the Prime Minister had increased the danger of war. He likened his offer of mediation to the Runciman mission to Czechoslovakia in 1938.

Rude to the Guests

Dr. Pickthorn reminded the House that, whatever the sins of Governments, there were 900,000 refugees driven from their homes by the chances of a conflict that was none of their making and that the first obligation was to them. The Prime Minister in reply spoke strong words about Bulge and Krush. He thought them quite beastly. "Fundamentally, Communist policy," he said, "aims at world domination. How then can there be real co-existence between Soviet Russia and ourselves?" But who was it first suggested that there could be? Who went to Geneva? Who invited the crazy gangsters to London? The situation in Palestine was, he said, one of "utmost danger." But it was far from clear what policy that had any hope of success—whether the Prime Minister's, the Foreign Secretary's or another—the Government had to avert that danger. Admittedly in the complication of events it is easier to say that there should be a policy than to say what the policy should be. But watching the Middle East slide to disaster is no more a policy than sleeping under a hedge is a new form of architecture. Meanwhile the Government will support Lord Merthyr's bill to impose a fine of £20 on anyone who gives anyone else a rabbit.

Day Trippers

Tuesday was a grey and fog-bound day. No touch of colour illuminated sky or Chamber, and no wonder, as soon as the news leaked out that Dr. Hill and Mrs. Braddock had paired for the day and gone off together to Torquay—to speak, we need hardly say, in the by-election and on opposite sides. Thus handicapped, the House got down to polishing off the Finance Bill. It was an eve-of-poll meeting for Mr. Gaitskell and an opportunity for Sir



The P. M. bares his teeth . . .

Robert Boothby and Lord Hinchings-brooke to have a go at the Government and for Mr. Butler to tell us to make up our minds to it that Purchase Tax was with us for ever.

This is the modern manner in which freedom broadens down from precedent to precedent. Put on by a Coalition Government with a promise that it was a temporary war-time tax, it is then continued by the Socialists when they are in office and denounced by the Conservatives in Opposition.

Fair Play

The Conservatives then take office and say the Socialists have no right to denounce it in Opposition because they did not abolish it in office, until at the end the Chancellor announces that it is only fair to the tax-payer to let him know where he stands and to tell him that the tax is permanent. It is like Captain Macheath who thought that it would be so much more comfortable for ladies in their coaches if he took his measures to see to it that they travelled light.

But the House of Lords is the place to get things done. Lord Jowitt, looking up the Dangerous Drugs Act, finds that, whatever the intrinsic rights and wrongs, the Government has no power to ban the manufacture of heroin. The Government in the course of the debate makes three separate statements. First Lord Mancroft says that the ban will be maintained in full. Then Lord Woolton says that licence to manufacture will be granted until the legal point is cleared up. Then Lord Salisbury says that licence to manufacture will be

granted for all 1956, and the lawyers had no doubt about it that Lord Jowitt was right. Game, set and match to Jowitt. There seems, if rumour is true, to have been some competition in modesty between Mr. Macleod and Mr. Lloyd George as to which of them should have the task of explaining all this to the Commons. If so, it was Mr. Lloyd George who won (or perhaps lost) the toss.

Sulks

Wednesday Question-time saw Mrs. Castle getting very angry, and the Orders of the Day a lot of Tories sitting about on the back-benches and, in spite of Socialist jeers, refusing to speak.

As it got towards seven o'clock the Socialist benches mysteriously emptied. Mr. Arthur Lewis tried to count the House out. The only question was whether the Bevanites would have a second chance to choose between "a desiccated calculating machine" and "a fourth-rate Tammany boss." The news came through that the chance was denied them and that Mr. Gaitskell was home.

CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS





BOOKING OFFICE

Buzzing-up-to-Town-for-a-Show

The Boy Friend. Sandy Wilson. *Deutsch*, 10/6

IT has become customary to refer to the present epoch as the Age of Anxiety, but it is possible that the future historian (that convenient mouth-piece for one's own opinions) may prefer to label it the Age of Nostalgia; for no previous age, surely, was ever so wholeheartedly preoccupied as ours with the *recherche du temps perdu*. The subject is ripe, one would suppose, for an historical monograph: exactly when and why did the nostalgic cult have its origin? Doubtless we may soon expect a revealing study from the hand (or hands) of Miss Bowen and/or Mr. Betjeman, who will point out that nostalgia is primarily an Anglo-Saxon phenomenon ("The myth of a Merrie England dates back certainly to the eighteenth century, and probably a good deal earlier; fostered by the Romantic Movement, it gained a new impetus in Victorian times, and two world wars have, etc., etc.").

In the theatre, however, nostalgia seems to be a comparatively modern development: it was not till the end of the 'twenties that Victorian and Edwardian revivals became popular (I can remember what must have been one of the first of its kind, at the Alhambra in 1929). Now it is the turn of the 'twenties themselves; but whereas in my young days we were content to laugh—rather unkindly—at the antics of our parents and grandparents, a younger generation approaches the *Vortex* period with a kind of Betjemanly ambivalence: they are as much inclined to cry as to laugh at it, and their satire is perhaps subtler and more serious than ours. Like Mr. Betjeman himself (one feels), they go to mock and stay to pray.

The Boy Friend has been successful beyond the wildest dreams of its author and producer, and I think its success thoroughly deserved, for it is that rare thing, a "light" entertainment which is also a work of art. It is not a burlesque; it can hardly even be called a pastiche; as Miss Vida Hope, its gifted producer, points out in a preface to the "book of the play," it was intended, in the first

place, to be a "serious reproduction of a period," and as such it could hardly be bettered. Yet it is much more than a mere "reproduction," for Mr. Sandy Wilson is genuinely in love with the 'twenties, and both words and music were plainly written not just for fun but *con amore*, with the result that he is able to convey the period atmosphere with a haunting vividness which many a "serious" playwright (or novelist or

but there is a hint of Cowardesque sophistication in such lines as:

*I don't claim that I am psychic,
But one look at you and I kick
Away every scruple, etc.,*

and "Doing the Riviera," in Act III, both in performance and in the text, suggests the kind of "hot" American musical which scarcely reached these shores till a few years later—I think *Good News* (1929) was about the first of them.

It must be unusual for the libretto of a musical comedy to be published at all: true, Mr. Coward published his collected lyrics and sketches, but surely the "book" of *The Girl Friend* or *Mercenary Mary* never found its way on to the shelves of Boots or Smiths? Few musical shows would stand the test, and I don't suppose *The Boy Friend* itself will have much appeal (apart from Mr. Wilson's amusing drawings) for anyone who hasn't seen the play; those who have, however, will certainly cherish it, humming the chorus numbers (whose words one can never quite catch in the theatre) and fitting the lyrics to those tunes which, more than anything else in the show, evoke the spirit of that tawdry, silly but endearing decade.

I have called *The Boy Friend* a "work of art," which may seem a rather pompous label for anything so unpretentious and so frivolous; yet the play has for me a touch of that genuinely "lyrical" quality which Mr. Connolly finds in Firbank and in all those works (they include the poetry of Horace and the music of Mozart) "that attempt, with a purity and a kind of dewy elegance, to portray the beauty of the moment, the gaiety and sadness, the fugitive distress of hedonism." Firbank, after all, was an inspired pasticheur, and though I'm not suggesting that Sandy Wilson is as good as Firbank, I do think that he is a true artist in his own line, and that *The Boy Friend* is a small masterpiece.

JOCELYN BROOKE

By Moonlight

A Beginning and Other Stories. Walter de la Mare. *Faber*, 12/6

In the dream-haunted world of reality in which the thoughts of Walter de la Mare move, clothing themselves in the



autobiographer, for that matter) might well envy.

Much of the play's success of course depended upon the details of production: not only the dresses and scenery but the stance and postures of the girls, their accents and facial expressions; for these we are largely indebted to Miss Vida Hope and to Mr. John Heawood, the choreographer. But the original conception was, after all, Mr. Wilson's, and it says a good deal for his powers of imaginative re-creation that even the "book and lyrics," in cold print, convey a distinct flavour of the period. The "book," for the most part, is based on the more artless type of twentyish show—*No, No, Nanette* or *The Girl Friend*—

semblance of men like lamp-posts with hooked noses, or women, "pallid and painted, lean as a starving cat" everything is magically evocative because of his canny knack of using the solid material to cast the uncanny spell.

In the title story the young man, Nicholas, looks at a pencil sketch of himself drawn by his mother years before. He remembers sitting on his mother's knee: "I can almost feel the fire on my bare legs." Peering from another window in another story, "The Quincunx," comes another phantom: "Seldom can moonshine have flattered a more haggard face." It is the purest of de la Marean moonshine which glides its light and casts its shadows over the thirteen examples in this, one of his best collections of short stories.

R. C. S.

The Paintings of Bruegel. F. Grossmann. Phaidon, 42/-

The greatness of Bruegel (Peter Bruegel the Elder, c. 1525-1569), as Mr. Grossmann points out, was not, as is sometimes implied, discovered in the twentieth century, but his reputation as one of the really great painters of the Low Countries has certainly grown enormously in the last half century. That extremely acute critic Baudelaire marked Bruegel down a hundred years ago as a figure of the first rank. Many of the pictures are political caricatures directed against the Spaniards in the Netherlands, of which the precise meaning is now forgotten.

Here much detail of the paintings is given, so that it is possible to observe the artist's characteristic designs and groupings. The delicacy of the colour and light is almost impossible to reproduce, though the coloured plates in the book show the force and originality of his method. There are few more striking experiences in the world of pictures than coming for the first time on the magnificent collection of Bruegel canvases at Vienna. Careful study of the detail available in this volume will no doubt add greatly to one's enjoyment when the opportunity to see a Bruegel next arises. Modern research tends to indicate that Bruegel did not himself come from peasant stock (largely supposed because he so often painted peasants), but, on the contrary, was of a fairly rich and well-to-do family.

A. P.

The Scrolls from the Dead Sea. Edmund Wilson. W. H. Allen, 10/6

This book, which promises excitement, affords but mild interest. Some important scrolls of the Biblical period were found in a cave beside the Dead Sea in 1947. Were they such as to alter the established conception of the Bible? Even to impugn its veracity? Edmund Wilson went to Palestine to investigate. He was troubled by the thought that the only people who could understand the scrolls were either Christian clerks with a vested interest in the uniqueness of the



Hollowood

"If three dock-workers earn twice as much as five schoolmasters . . ."

New Testament or Jewish scholars with a similar emotional attachment to the Masoretic text. Mr. Wilson was impartial. But what, exactly, could he do? He learned Hebrew, the blurb says. Alas, something more than mugged-up Hebrew is needed to appraise documents of such antiquity, and all Mr. Wilson was able to do, when it came to the point, was interview different authorities and judge (according to the canons of his proper subject, literary criticism?) whom and what to believe.

He concludes that the scrolls contain evidence of the characteristic doctrines of Christianity having been held by a Jewish sect before they were expounded by Christ. Perhaps they do. But the discovery would surely not, as Mr. Wilson believes, revolutionize our idea of what Christianity is. The claim of Christianity has never been that Christ said what nobody had ever said before, but that Christ brought to the world what nobody had ever brought before, namely redemption.

M. C.

AT THE PLAY



Henry V (OLD VIC)
Morning's at Seven (COMEDY)

THE Archbishop of Canterbury's intolerable exposition of the Salic Law gives Henry V a slow beginning, but the speech is not mere wind; it is the conclusive argument that settles the King's doubts and persuades him that the time has come to invade France. Trying to lighten the pudding, MICHAEL BENTHALL has turned the two bishops almost into Broker's Men, two anticlerics who could not have persuaded anyone of anything. Having thus started the play on the wrong foot, Mr. BENTHALL recovers his balance immediately, never losing it again except briefly in the

exaggerated panic into which he throws the French nobles after Agincourt. His production is fluid, fast-moving and, with these two reservations, sure in humour, both in that of the official comics and in such extra touches as suggesting the immutability of the British soldier by making the Gower of DEREK FRANCIS an aged cavalry bore of Edwardian vintage. Against a geographical back-cloth on which, in the few dull moments of the play, you can plan your next French holiday, AUDREY CRUDDAS drops a series of pleasing objects, pub signs, canopies, and so on, whose vertical take-off leaves the stage instantly clear for the troops.

All this would be little without a good Henry, but since he played the part at Stratford four years ago RICHARD BURTON has improved in every way. Already he had the necessary sincerity and directness; now he has gained in authority and sympathy, and there is much more variety in voice and facial expression. He makes an enormously likeable young king, on whom the "Boar's Head" night-clashes in sociology have clearly not been lost; but behind his ease and simplicity lie dignity and strength of character. With ZENA WALKER's spirited Katherine he plays the love scene charmingly. Some flaws remain in his handling of verse, though this is much more certain than it was at Stratford; he still cannot control a shout, becoming raucous, and unaccountably he throws away the Harfleur speech in a spate of words. Even reluctant soldiers would have followed him into the breach, however, and that is the main test of a Henry.

Most of the key positions are strongly held. JOHN NEVILLE speaks Chorus as beautifully as I expected; DUDLEY JONES is a marvellous Fluellen, the full authentic character; as Exeter JACK GWILLIM achieves the distinction rare in Shakespeare of looking and sounding the kind of man on whom a king would lean; and Falstaff's relics are in likely hands, RICHARD WORDSWORTH and JOE STEWART giving us a flowery humbug of a Pistol and a sad and winning Nym.

The low-compression American comedy, a million miles away from the wisecrack and all the bright professional machinery of laughter, comes seldom and as a huge relief. Except by Russian standards *Morning's at Seven* is scarcely a play, so little happens; it consists of observations, gentle and microscopic, of rather futile people living in a backwater, and it would have been stronger if its author, PAUL OSBORN, had not attempted in his third act a conventional tidying-up of loose ends. Obviously he has read Chekhov and his title might have been *Four Sisters*; but the play is genuinely American, and at the same time genuinely human, so that in his characters one is constantly recognizing one's own childish uncertainties and one's own secret futilities. Skillfully and with

understanding it examines minds pushed a little askew by wear and tear, and while it is often extremely amusing, the comedy has a lining of pathos, too real to need more than suggestion. Of plot there is none, except that a son of forty, tied to his mother, has been engaged for five years and cannot bring himself to marry, that two of the husbands are failures, and that the third, reasonably married, goes in mild fear of the discovery of his beautiful affair with the fourth sister, now slightly mad and living in his house. Mr. OSBORN's insight into the patient confusions of the old and the raw anxieties of the young makes this in some ways a memorable play. It is not quite a whole, because finally it seems to lose faith in itself, giving the impression of a short story with a contrived end. And it may not be everybody's cup of tea. I can only say that for most of the way it's mine.

Produced by JACK MINSTER, it is acted consistently well, by a cast which interprets with delicacy the author's fine shades of feeling. One performance is even better, that of MARGARET VINES as the bitter, suspicious spinster aunt, whose absurdity is brilliantly tinged with something near tragedy.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

PAUL SCOFIELD in *Hamlet* (Phoenix—14/12/55). For holiday treats, *Salad Days* (Vaudeville—18/8/54) and *Lucky Strike* (Duke of Yorks—21/9/55) are guaranteed non-Freudian.

ERIC KROWN

AT THE EXHIBITION

Period Dolls' Houses from Many Lands

THE familiar things of domestic life have never been more lovingly, more tenderly exposed than in this exhibition, which shows the development of the Baby House of the early eighteenth century to the dolls' house of the nineteenth and twentieth.

Mrs. Graham Greene, from whose collection many of the dolls' houses come, says in her foreword to the catalogue, "There is a kind of pathos in the idea that a toy can survive the lifetime of its owner"; and these dolls' houses are far more real and touching than the reconstructed period rooms of museums, which have never been lived in even by dolls—never loved, never wrecked in a fit of temper, never subjected to those drastic spring-cleanings indulged in by small girls on wet days.

Between the Westbrook Queen Anne house and the Medici Society's modern reproduction of a Georgian house, there are many mansions; the most notable being the Longleat Baby House, loaned by the Marquess of Bath, and the Tate Baby House of 1760 from the Bethnal Green museum. This has a central winding staircase lit from above by a lantern dome; the dining-room wallpaper and much of the furniture is original. Throstle Nest Hall, of the William Kent period, is unfurnished and little is known of its history; with its empty grates, stained wallpapers, and

uncurtained windows, it has the melancholy of a house long unoccupied for some sinister reason: a suicide, a wife who ran away, a ghost? Another eighteenth-century house is, in fact, called the Haunted House. But by the nineteenth century, comfortable well-off domesticity is the note, the domesticity which endured those endless winter evenings of Victorian days. Home life was a sandwich then: rich and full of protein in the middle of the house; plain and stale in the dreadful kitchens below and in the cheerless servants' bedrooms in the attics.

The international section includes a Nuremberg kitchen, the forerunner of the Baby House; an American dining-room of 1890, a Swedish kitchen, a South African hacienda, a modern Japanese dolls' house. A nineteenth-century room from the Netherlands is familiar to us from the Dutch paintings, but reveals how much tidying up and sorting out the selective eye of an artist does—here we have an immense accumulation of the minutiae of family life in all its muddle.

A section is devoted to dolls' furniture and trivia from private collections and museums, such as the *Musée des Arts Décoratifs*, and includes some Victorian pieces made by the upholsterer at Buckingham Palace and some fine journeyman's pieces. The exhibition, which is presented by the House of Bewlay at 138 Park Lane, is open until January 7th. Admission 1/-, children half-price; proceeds to the Children's Aid Society.

ALISON ADBURGHAM



King Henry the Fifth—RICHARD BURTON

(King Henry V)

AT THE GALLERY

English Taste in the Eighteenth Century
(Royal Academy. Closes February 26)

Élégance Militaire
(Redfern Gallery. Closes December 31)

THOSE who think of the Royal Academy as the setting invariably of paintings will in this case be agreeably disappointed. It is primarily the furniture, textiles, carpets, porcelain, and pottery which dictate the exhilarating mood of this eighteenth-century exhibition. An example may be given of one type of furniture only, the staggering elaborateness of which is rendered with corresponding virtuosity, "Cabinet and stand in Chinese taste" (No. 240), described thus in the catalogue: "Centre compartment surmounted with pagoda roof with escutcheon and two bracket candlesticks, lattice-work gallery—the hundred drawers in interior veneered with a large variety of coloured woods." And yet it magically incorporates both sobriety and elegance.

Two Soho Chinoiserie tapestries both decorate and illustrate a story (that of "The Three Brothers," described in a pamphlet by the lender, Christabel Lady Aberconway). Two fine carpets stand out for their gaiety, No. 190 Arabesque

(rococo), perhaps the prettier of the two although smaller and less ambitious than the vast Adam piece designed for Syon House. A particularly delicious small Hogarth group—George II and family—is the finest painting in the exhibition, which includes some large decorative canvases by Amigoni, unlike the Hogarth not easily missed. There is a good Marcellus Laroon and some grisailles by Thornhill, which latter may be most seriously recommended to all students interested in the effective handling of oil paint. The show should attract a wide public besides the cognoscenti, and with the excellent catalogue prove a most useful educational aid for the hordes of visitors to the country houses of England.

That *Elégance Militaire* dies a slow death is proved by the fascinated onlookers as the Guards, mounted on foot, proceed to or from Buckingham Palace or Whitehall. The Redfern Gallery, never slow to spot a good thing, have now indulged our martial tastes with a show of nearly one thousand items illustrating military types. Naturally there is a wide range of quality in the collection, but it is all worth exhibiting, and there is included a number of fine paintings, some attributed and some left to the speculation of the spectator. There is, for instance, one possible Bonington. Which? Your turn to guess.

ADRIAN DAINTRY



AT THE PICTURES

The Ladykillers
The Left Hand of God

THE comedy in *The Ladykillers* (Director: ALEXANDER MACKEN-DRICK) almost all depends in some way on incongruity. At the heart of it is as ill-assorted a little gang of criminals as a calculating script-writer ever put together; they choose to camouflage their machinations by pretending to be, of all things, a string quintet, fond of playing, of all things, Boccherini; and on top of this, they meet in the house and under the motherly and at first approving eye of a Dear Old Lady.

This old lady, beautifully portrayed by KATIE JOHNSON, succeeds in being the principal character in the film, even though the leader of the gang is ALEC GUINNESS in the guise of a pallid, dank-haired, cadaverously smiling Professor straight out of a Charles Addams drawing. The mere strangeness of the situation would be enough to make almost any "old lady" effective, but Miss JOHNSON as Mrs. Wilberforce is a real character, with her parrots, her tasselled furniture, and her memories of a tall bearded husband who went down with his ship long ago. Far from being only an incongruous symbol, just there for laughs, she precipitates the climax by finding out what the gang is up to, talking to them sternly, and allowing them no alternative (short of the



(The Ladykillers)
Louis—HERBERT LOM The Professor—ALEC GUINNESS
One-Round—DANNY GREEN The Major—CECIL PARKER
Harry—PETER SELLERS

inconceivable one of giving back the sixty thousand pounds they have succeeded in lifting from a van at King's Cross) but to try to murder her.

Individual reluctance to go as far as this breaks up the gang and does for them one by one. The little house backs on to the parapet of a railway tunnel, and in turn, the Professor's last, their lifeless forms drop from it into conveniently passing goods trains. It may seem a dubious comedy that ends with so many corpses (there must surely, by the way, be a few more stories in what happened when the trains, wherever they got to, were unloaded), but the mood of this one is so well established and kept that, comic—and to that extent endearing—as most of these characters are, one is not upset to see them liquidated. Mrs. Wilberforce, a much more important person, is left sitting pretty; that's what matters.

I found it all enjoyable and often very funny. The latest and oddest addition to the Guinness gallery of oddities is memorably comic, the other members of the gang are well sketched by CECIL PARKER, HERBERT LOM, PETER SELLERS and DANNY GREEN, and as always in Ealing films (this is regrettably the last) every corner of the story is decorated with inventive detail and diverting minor characters. But the leading lady, in every sense, is Miss JOHNSON; quite an achievement at seventy-seven.

The Left Hand of God (Director: EDWARD DMYTRYK) falls into that uneasy category that might be described, with a slight wrenching of musical terminology, as religioso-amoroso. Presented with

HUMPHREY BOGART as hero and GENE TIERNEY as heroine, the customers are invited to wonder anxiously how there can possibly be a "happy ending" in view of the fact that the Bogart character appears to be a priest; and then after three-quarters of an hour they are reassured by the revelation that, though a good man and properly heroic, he is only disguised as one. The scene is China; he is a U.S. pilot escaping from Yang, a Chinese war-lord (LEE J. COHN), and the big scene is when he gambles with Yang, staking his liberty against the safety of the village mission where the heroine is a nurse. Guess who wins...

The piece is essentially what used to be known to commercial showmen as a clinch-teaser, religion being used as one of the obstacles to the final embrace. These are hard words to use of a film—from a distinguished director—that is technically so well done, often visually impressive, and always in its way interesting; but I think even people with no religious feeling at all will find the basic idea a bit distasteful.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

In London the big news is of course *Richard III*, of which more next week. Of the established ones, most important is *The Fiends*, or *Les Diaboliques* (14/12/55).

Nothing among the new releases I would specially recommend. *An Alligator Named Daisy* (14/12/55) has good bits; *Tiger in the Sky* (2/11/55) is a visually impressive, otherwise conventional biography of an American air ace; *The Tall Men* is a spectacular Western.

RICHARD MALLETT



ON THE AIR

This Vale of Tears

THE B.B.C.'s new series of television plays, *The Adventures of Annabel*, by Anthony Steven, threatens to reach a new low in dramatic entertainment. In *The Hundred Million Francs*, starring Elizabeth Allan and Hugh Sinclair, the level attained was that of a sketch written and produced by a team of cinema usherettes and given before an audience of boy scouts.

This, I suppose, is how the B.B.C. intends to compete with the I.T.A. and its plethora of American thrillers, its *Dragnet*, *Inner Sanctum* and the rest, but nobody in his senses could possibly prefer the British model. Transatlantic thrillers, worthless though they are, do at least contain elements of good craftsmanship, the germ of a plot, fairly crisp dialogue and neat timing: this new B.B.C. series is shamateurish, bloodless, vacuous. A waste land of dreariness. Elizabeth Allan played Annabel as if in a trance. She was probably wishing herself back into the cosier pointlessness of "What's My Line?"

When Michael Barry, head of B.B.C. television drama, appeared before the cameras to introduce two plays written for the Cheltenham Literary Festival (1955 TV Play Competition) I suspected that viewers were in for a difficult ninety minutes. When Channel 1 indulges in luxury wrapping, the goods offered are invariably sub-standard or short-weight: when it tries to explain what it is driving at, the explanation can usually be regarded as an apology in advance.

My suspicions were confirmed. These two plays made poor entertainment.



[The Adventures of Annabel
Annabel—ELIZABETH ALLAN; Robert Hayward—HUGH SINCLAIR
Richard Barrett—PATRICK TROUGHTON; Arnold Firbank—
GEOFFREY DUNN

The first, *That One Talent*, by John and Joan Ormerod, failed for lack of convincing dialogue. The point of the sketch was original—the blind leading the blind away from disaster—but the characters were without substance, stilted in conversation and like puppets in their reactions to conventional stimuli. Several of the players suggested by their performance that they found the material inadequate and unrewarding.

The second play, *Wilde West*, by Elaine Morgan, was an ambitious trifle based on an imaginary episode in Oscar Wilde's celebrated tour of the U.S.A. in 1882. Its degree of success depended very largely on the playwright's ability to reproduce a fair copy of Wilde's paradox and euphuism, and this was not in evidence. A good idea that misfired.

I have been trying to rationalise my persisting distaste for the popular series "Is This Your Problem?"—in which a group of advisers, prompted by Edana Romney and Edgar Lustgarten, "attempt

to throw some light on personal problems brought to the studio by viewers." My chief objection to the programme is that it caters unnecessarily for a mean and morbid streak in human nature. I do not deny that many viewers accept and enjoy the disclosures quite innocently as fiction, just as they enjoy a crime novel or newspaper accounts of dirty work at the crossroads. Nor do I challenge the claim that some viewers are helped to a solution of their own problems by what they hear in this programme. It is my opinion, however, that the problems posed would lose their interest for most people if the paraded victims of unhappy circumstances were inaudible and unseen. There is an unwholesome

vicar-in-the-barrel, prison-gates atmosphere about the proceedings which should be left, I suggest, to certain Sunday newspapers.

If the real aim of the programme is to coach people towards a solution of their personal problems it would surely be wiser to deal with the trials of unmarried mothers, agnostic schoolmasters, housewives burdened with the inferiority complex, ex-convicts, homeless couples and so on, in more general terms. At present the experts' words of comfort are levelled at a small group of exhibitionists when they might be helping thousands of less demonstrative sufferers. But the proper place for the airing of skeletons-in-the-cupboard is the privacy of the doctor's surgery, the vestry, the offices of the various advice and guidance bureaux. I am troubled by the thought that many of those who step so boldly into the limelight with their troubles might live to regret it.

BERNARD HOLLOWOOD



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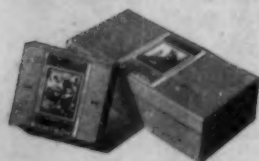
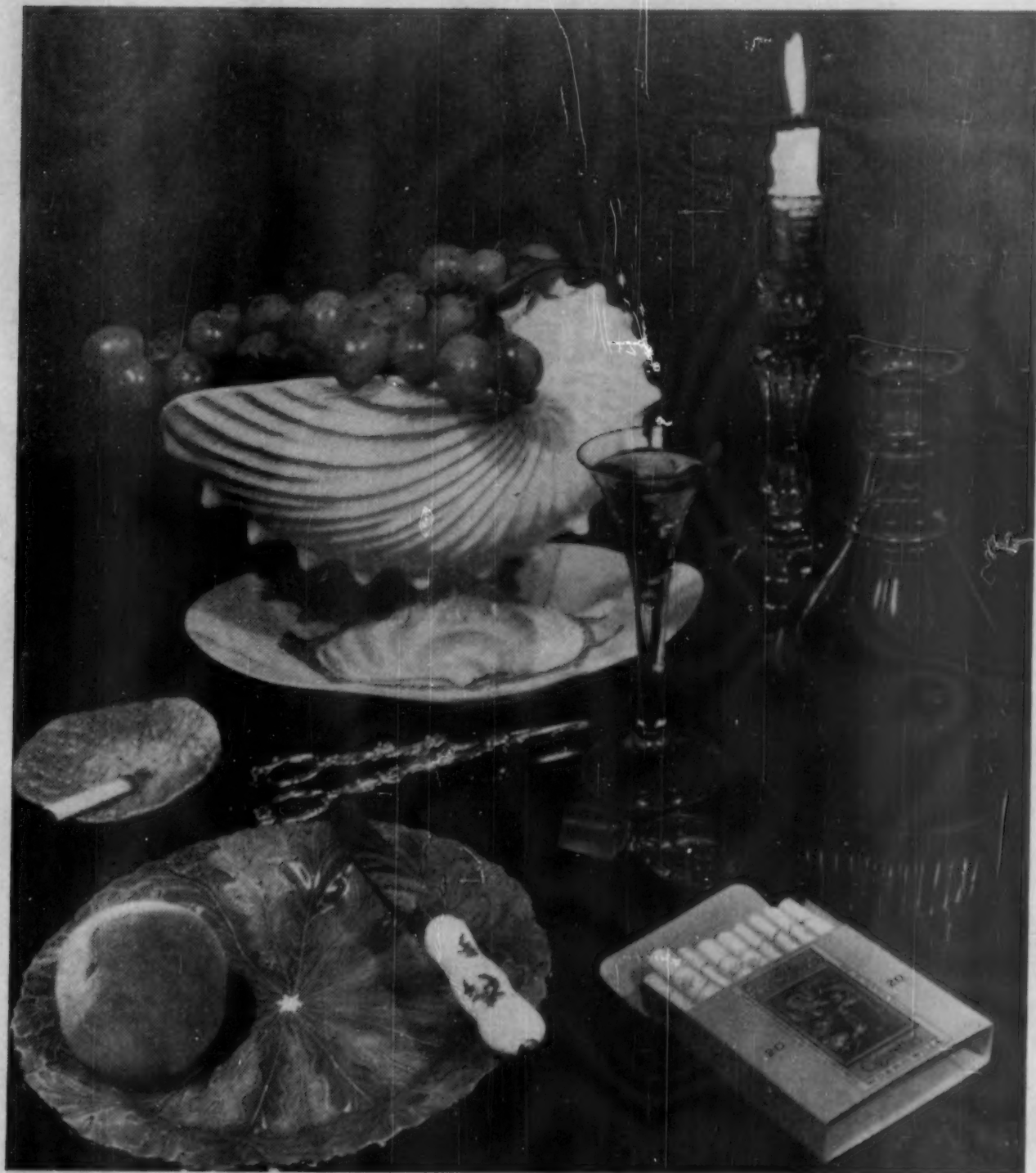
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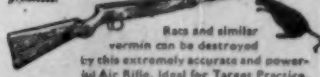
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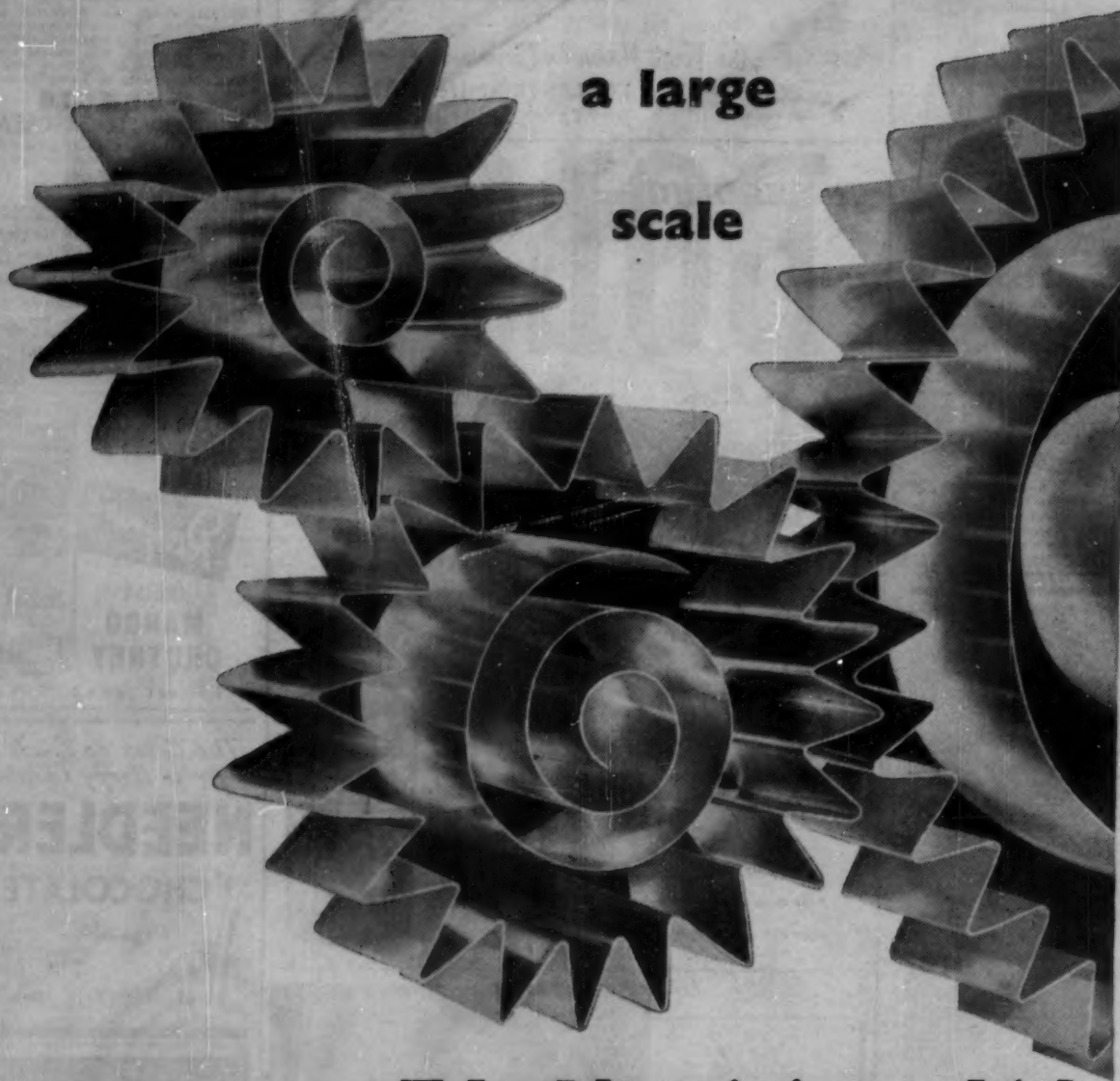
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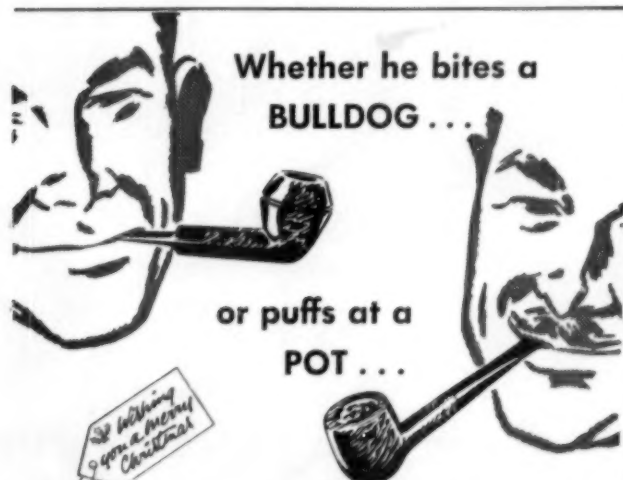
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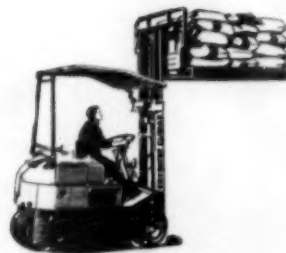
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